The Poetry Review

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LORD ELTON

'Love is a Many-sided Thing.'

JOHN SMITH

KENNETH HARE

VERNON SCANNELL

Many Poems of Distinction and New Prize Competitions.

TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: IF YOU CAN BUY THE BOOKS THAT ARE PUBLISHED BY OUR ADVERTISERS YOU WILL BE GIVING HELP ALL ROUND

TO OUR WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

*

IN YOUR OWN INTEREST READ CAREFULLY -

1. **No manuscripts can be considered** which have not the name and address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. **A self-addressed stamped envelope** must always be enclosed or, if an overseas contributor, the Coupon-Response International. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
3. One side only of the paper must be used: typescript is preferred.
4. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
5. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
6. Poems over thirty lines in length have a doubtful chance of acceptance.
7. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least three months have elapsed. Inquiries by telephone cannot be dealt with.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

THESE PAGES – AN OFFERING TO

Edwin Muir

. . . Myself, the Many and the One,
The changing and the unchanging Land . . .

Prelude: THE HAPPIEST OF THE POETS

An event which has become for many people of major importance in The Poetry Society's year, judging by the number of late applicants for admission who were luckless enough to be informed that all the tickets had been disposed of weeks ago, was held in London on the 12th May. The following announcement appeared in *The Times*:

> The annual luncheon of the Poetry Society was held on Saturday at the English-Speaking Union. The president, Mr. Thomas Moult, was in the chair, and the guests and speakers included:
>
> The Polish Ambassador and Mme. Milnikiel, Sir Alfred and Lady Munnings, Miss Ruth Pitter, Miss Margaret Rawlings, Miss Joyce Grenfell, Miss Moira Lister, Mr. Kennedy Williamson, Mr. A. E. Coppard, Mr. W. R. Latham, and Professor Zangwill.

A telegram of greetings and wishes from Mr. Walter de la Mare* was received too late for the Luncheon, and it was read to the Annual General Meeting ten days later – probably his last message to the outside world:

> 'This brings my kindest remembrances to Mr. President of a friendship extending over half a lifetime and do please assure even the youngest members of the Society present at your Luncheon to-day that in spite of age and far too much writing, I still share to the full their devotion and faith in all that is meant by poetry and wish them well. – WALTER DE LA MARE.'

We need hardly add that this third Annual Luncheon was successful – more successful, indeed, than either of the earlier luncheons – and a report is printed elsewhere in these pages. Immediately following our Editorial Prelude is Mr. Kennedy Williamson's delightful toast in rhyme, 'Our Guests', which we are giving pride of place in accordance with the general wish of his colleagues, who regard it as the ideal for such an occasion.

*

A leading journalist of our time was asked by his editor to delete from his literary contributions the word *death*, or any that implied it, because the journal concerned was run by proprietors who did not believe in it. The journalist's mild protest was: 'But people *do* die, don't they?'

At the recent Annual Meeting of The Poetry Society another member of our Council, the Rev. F. Pratt Green, speaking from the same factual point of view as the aforesaid journalist, made a suggestion which he now repeats: 'When making a Will, and presuming there is a residue after death-duties and provision for one's nearest and dearest, it is pleasant to do something

* The news of Walter de la Mare's death on 22nd June came to us too late for anything but this brief intimation.

for those societies whose work you have admired, supported, and want to see continued for the benefit of future generations. It is almost a debt of honour. So you leave £100, or £50, or £25 to – well, to The Poetry Society of Great Britain, for example. Not that you are really doing anything at the moment, at least nothing more than instruct your solicitor, who looks as if a little poetry would do him a lot of good.

'But you've already made your Will? How pleasant, as an after-thought, to add the codicil that one day will encourage the Society's Treasurer, whoever he may be. Not, of course, that he would rather have your money than your life. But suppose there isn't a Poetry Society of Great Britain when your Will comes into effect? You allow for that, naturally, in a form of words your solicitor, or the Poetry Society, will willingly provide. Long live the P.S. of G.B.! And may you live long, too!

'Seriously, why not?'

*

A little while ago a group of men and women gathered at Bexley Heath, once a green and open place in Kent but now a populous area, fifteen miles out of London, to do homage to a famous old home and the far more famous man who planned and erected it for himself and his bride ninety-six years ago. He was William Morris, poet, painter, novelist, printer, wood-engraver, weaver, carver, calligrapher, and humanist. And his 'Red House', as he named it, has been declared by *The Times* as possessing more architectural significance than any house built during the past century.

From that address his modern devotees, who rank him with Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Albrecht Dürer, and the builders of the great medieval cathedrals, and who believe that his life and teachings possess value for to-day, have announced the formation of a William Morris Society, who aim to extend the knowledge of one who was not only, in W. B. Yeats's words, 'the happiest of the poets', but for many printers the patron saint of their craft.

His spirit was surely enriched by those early years at the Red House. We feel it in all his work, and although some may ape the fashion and dismiss Morris's poetry (with Tennyson's and Wordsworth's!) as 'stupid', they will surely accept, as the bibliophiles do, his *Kelmscott Chaucer* as the most beautiful book in the world. The founders of the William Morris Society believe that his life and teachings have value for to-day. 'Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death: and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them.'

*

Replying to an invitation to join The Poetry Society, a would-be contributor wrote this: 'The fact that one is not a member of The Poetry Society is unimportant. I have often thought of joining, but would find the Friday evening meetings impossible and at any rate I always read every issue from cover to cover in the Public Library.'

The Society's reply follows:

'Dear Madam, We can only thank our lucky stars that your attitude to membership is unusual. If it were generally held there could be no Poetry Society, no *Poetry Review*, nowhere to submit your contributions – or, rather, a sympathetic opening fewer for their possible acceptance, and such openings have become scarce enough in all conscience.

'Let it be said at once that although our very existence depends on the support,

financial especially, of every friend of Poetry – and as Poetry is England's greatest heritage all English men and English women ought to be its friends – we do not welcome as members those who regard The Poetry Society only as an organization which might be of use to them personally. Something more altruistic is required, however concerned we may be about our own opportunities.

'The world, as we know only too well, is now in such a state that without Poetry and the other things that make for Beauty, Truth and Goodness, life would hardly be worth living. We quote an eminent critic, D. S. MacColl, who wrote these words in his biography of the painter Wilson Steer: "The battles for Beauty are never finally won: in each generation they must be fought afresh. It depends on a few voices in each of them whether Titian counts as a master. Let us not be missing among *The Knights of the Holy Spirit*".

'For Titian read the name of any of the immortal poets. The Poetry Society calls for the support of those who wish Everyman to know and treasure the masters and maybe add to them.'

A further letter from the correspondent followed immediately. It began: *You have shamed me into joining. Here is my entrance-fee and first yearly subscription . . .*

*

The names of John and Edward Bumpus are honoured in the book world, and although we know their famous bookshop chiefly as a business concern, there was a time when they published books also. How pleasant, therefore, it is to encounter them on a title-page again. Especially well remembered are the halcyon days when John G. Wilson, best-loved of all booksellers and chief of the firm, encouraged young poets by issuing their works himself: and here he is, introducing (without his own name appearing in it) a little book, *Scala Sancta Amoris*, composed of dedicatory sonnets concluding with an epilogue 'Dis Manibus' of most moving four-line stanzas, addressed anonymously to one who is here no longer and written during 'the month of your birthday in this world, of your birthday in the other.' To attempt to discover who is the author would be sacrilege: better that we should read quietly a document as intimate and beautiful as wandering through a country churchyard without heeding any of the old names inscribed on the hallowed stones.

*

Our congratulations go to Miss Alice V. Stuart (a frequent contributor to these pages) on her appointment as a Scottish delegate to the P.E.N. International Congress in London this summer, and to Miss A. R. Kendall, contributor of verse and drawings to *The Voice of Youth*, on several triumphs with her paintings since her recent arrival here from Cyprus. The latest of these is the selection of her large oil-painting as an exhibit in the ninety-fifth Exhibition of Painting, Sculpture, and Crafts by The Society of Women Artists, held last month in London.

*

Postscripts. – Robert Bridger, Pamela Corsie and Joan Addison: these three are to be congratulated on their recent success in The Poetry Society's Verse-speaking Examination, when Miss Margaret Rawlings awarded each of them the coveted Gold Medal. Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Thomas Hardy, Frances Thompson, and William Plomer were their chosen poets . . . The *Manchester Guardian* declares that in T. S. Eliot's play, *The Family Reunion*, now being revived with Dame Sybil Thorndike and Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies in the cast, we have 'the best verse-speaking to be heard in London at the moment . . .'

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

'OUR GUESTS'

KENNEDY WILLIAMSON*

Ladies and gentlemen, how do you do?
I hope that life has been as kind to you
As I have found it, since, say, 1.15.
With pleasant food, choice wine, a festive scene
And celebrated Guests – ah me, the Guests! –
Could one in reason proffer more behests
To gods and Muses on Mount Helicon?
Not so. The Guests are *sine quibus non.*

We greet PAUL SELVER whose sardonic eye
Sees much in modern life to scarify.
He gives his scalpel as abundant scope
As Martial did, or Alexander Pope.
He could not architect a sonnet badly,
Nor can he suffer fools and follies gladly.

Professor ZANGWILL**, brain corrector, we
Could often do with you at 33.
I wonder if your famous sire foresaw
How wisely you would choose your father-in-law.
Superfluous to wish you Joy in life
Since you already have that in your wife.
We welcome you most warmly and sincerely,
But please don't scrutinize our brains too nearly.

Dear A. E. COPPARD, what a range, it seems,
He has of colourful and bizarre themes.
Black Dogs, Pink Furniture and *Hips and Haws*
All equally evoke the world's applause;
And when *Clorinda Walks in Heaven*, the route
Can be enraptured by a *Ninepenny Flute.*
As eager fans, he'll hardly overwork us,
Or tire his readers in *The Silver Circus.*
Of happiness, long may he have his fill,
And save his bacon on the Dunmow Hill.

MISS MARGARET RAWLINGS, since she last made one
In this assemblage, has had lots of fun

*Proposing the Toast at The Poetry Society's Luncheon, 1956.

**Professor Zangwill, son of the late Israel Zangwill, married Joy Sylvia, daughter of Thomas Moult.

(As also her admirers) and has scored
A notable success as Mistress Ford;
And later on, Miss Rawlings did not fail
To score a triumph in *A Winter's Tale.*
Her followers in unison complain
'No Heartsease' till she gives it us again.

What can a speaker say of MOIRA LISTER
That's worthy? – Aphrodite's little sister.
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Well not, I think, an English one in May.
I quote the verses which I spoke last year
And which the errant lady didn't hear
Because like Ariel she was whisked away
Before I had a chance to say my say:–
'The Poetry Society is in debt
To one whose roles as Charmian, Juliet,
Olivia, Desdemona and a score
Of others bring her eulogies galore.
Miss Moira Lister gives us real delights
At No. 33 on Friday nights.
She'll win yet greener laurels, I am sure,
On her projected continental tour'.
Those words were said a year ago. As you
Well know, the prophecy has turned out true.

Maintaining always a respectful distance,
I come now to our pieces of resistance.

EUGENIUSZ MILNIKIEL I acclaim,
Hoping to Heav'n I'm right about the name.
Our warmth of welcome brooks no refutation;
I cannot guarantee pronunciation.
Conrad reminds us that between our nation
And Poland there's the faintest demarcation.
Let Poles and Englishmen make contact, for
That's the best usage of a Corridor.

Now, let me see. Who else is on my list?
That rarity a woman humorist.
In printer's type no less than on the stage
She ridicules the follies of the age.
She seems to have the greater pleasure, if
The challenges involved are pretty stiff;

And when the challenges are even stiffer,
She's better still, as in 'We Beg to Differ'.
JOYCE GRENFELL is, I think you will agree,
Cornelia Otis Skinner *anglice.*

We greet a RUTH, though not, we hope, forlorn,
And here indeed amid no alien corn.
In such a gathering what could be fitter
Than the engaging presence of Miss PITTER?
Queen's Medallist for Poetry, please note.
In 1934 Miss Pitter wrote
The Garland of a Lady Who Was Bats.
She's also an authority on Cats.
It's kind of you to be with us to-day.
Accept this oratorical bouquet.
As there are others who demand my chatter,
This is the climax of my Pitter-patter.

How proud we are to have with us to-day
A great Past President of the R.A.,
And for SIR ALFRED MUNNINGS' peace of mind,
I give my affidavit he will find
That this Society breeds no recruits
To the accursed squadron of 'young brutes'.
What formidable strongholds can he shatter
By simply asking 'Does the Subject Matter?'
It's surely quite indubitably true
Who shouts 'Yahoo!' proclaims himself Yahoo.
He's famed for 'Changing Horses' but I deem
He's much too wise to do so in mid-stream.

Now *all* the Guests – not only those that I
Have ventured in this speech to specify –
We hail you no less eagerly than these;
And all the others present here will please
Recharge their glasses with the Hippocrene
And now perform this excellent routine,
As by this Toast we cheerfully convey
Our greetings to the Guests with us to-day.

*

EDITORIAL NOTE – Odette Tchernine's report on the Annual Luncheon, page 184, includes a Grace for the occasion, written and spoken by The Rev. J. H. Ward.

WHILE ROSES BLOW

For any Cricketer

THOMAS MOULT

While roses blow the clover-field is yours.
Measure their season: so your lease endures.
  Match with their sweetness every fruitful sound:
  Tread worthily this June-lit slip of ground.
Soon (ah, too soon!) the autumn's mist obscures
The sun, and, sunless, never the rose matures
Or the white-flowering game. What bloom allures
  That's winter-nipped? What bat when football's round?

  While roses blow
Be cricket-hearted. Thus your play ensures
More than a bowling trick or many fours.
  It means a crease by unseen roses bound.
  For then, though summer fades, all winter's crowned
With the warm graces that the game makes yours
  While roses blow.

TRANSFIGURATION

JOYCE EVELEGH

Close-cropped, the Hunt field slopes
Behind the trees to meet the sky:
A still November sky, a barren field
Asleep in tranquil uniformity.

Then, swift and stark, the sun
Behind the church, flames orange-eyed,
And each bare branch of every tree seems limned
With gleaming gold, the field with saffron dyed.
Slowly, across the sky
There floats, and sinks, and lifts again,
A single gull, caught in the burnished glow,
Its white breast mantled with a crimson stain.

So man, in moments rare,
Soars upward to a height untrod,
And – all unknowingly, perchance – reflects
The splendour and the majesty of God.

A MAN OF VISION

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

Delicate-fingered, but with wrists of iron;
Meek as a maid till stirred
In a great cause; then steel to him is stubble,
And death an idle word;

Fantastic dreamer, yet with sleepless patience
Giving his dreams design;
Laugher at tavern ribaldries, yet inly
Chaste as a candled shrine;

A seeming flippant fool in hours of crisis
When patriots grandly foam;
Yet his, not theirs, the vision of the glory
Surpassing Greece and Rome.

Such is the man the world's corruption fancies
It can ignore or gull –
Who fools it by his faith far more deceptive
Than tricks of crook or trull;

Complex in greatness, yet at core a crystal
Simplicity of soul;
Candid as salt, and with its mystery missioned
To purity the whole.

THE NIGHTINGALE

JOHN HOFFMAN

There is no darkness when I sing,
  No devouring night, only choirs of stars
Their daily music carolling –
  Orion, Venus, Pleiades, the Plough and Mars.

I thrust my throat upon the thorn,
  Transmuting earthly turmoil, wounds and pain – I yearn
For Him only – a song born
  Of the divine Love, with praise and thanks to Him I turn.

THE TWO OTHELLOS AT THE OLD VIC

STEPHANIE BOYD

Up with the curtain go the ready sails
Of our attention; close to London's boom
But free to take us on iambic waves
To Venice and to Cyprus for to-night.
They flap already in the wind of words
And curve before the force of fantasy.
So we are off, rash midgets on such seas!

But oh, the witchcraft Desdemona knew
When she so gently, miserably loved,
Is surmise still for us, the unbewitched.
For this Othello's like a Bunsen flame,
Least able to affect us at the source
Where there is too much pressure – air, not fire:
So he may move his eyes but not our hearts.
And when at last he growls in stocky rage,
He's less a bloodhound nosing on to death
Than an uneasy boy in fancy dress
Who gasconades to fortify his nerve.
Yet balance him with Iago – who's to choose?
The bad egg should weigh lighter. Here there's doubt,
For Iago can be separated still:
Witness the honest clarity that lies
Around the yolk of all his yellow talk.
He'd have us there like doctors in the house
To watch him lie more naked than ashamed,
Exposing every vile and strange complaint
And begging further study of his case,
Without desiring judgment or a cure.
Here's Iago as an exhibitionist.

Burton and Neville make the passions high,
Then try to curry favour with the gods,
But all the sugared chutney of our love
Cannot undo the error of their sauce.

Miscalculation brought us to these straits
Through unexpected, gallimaufric storms
That strained our senses as they sensed the strain,
Leaving us angry at such waste of power.

We wait becalmed, using the breathing-space
To polish up the compass of the play
And mark its points again. There's still a chance
To make up leeway by to-morrow night.

Here's better value – lines between the lines:
Ultimate contrast in the sultry air
Splintered like ice to frosty cadences
Beneath the cold and hoary stars of oaths
That burn Othello's tongue. His mind's on fire
And ours are bright brigades to chase the blaze
Of that elusive personality.
Once he was ruff to Desdemona's reeve
(Till Iago double-ruffed him with his tricks):
Now he shouts rough abuses at his love,
Loving the treasured target while he shouts.
In sympathy we suffer with his soul
And end by drowning in those dying eyes
Before the lids of pity lock their weirs.
It was Iago damned them. Half-dismayed,
Half-full of squalid joy, he found his power;
Like a young girl who paints her face for fun
But vamps in earnest when the game begins.
She would deceive Roderigo, cheat the Moor
And mock at Cassio: so he does too.
He did not dream of their perdition first.
Only coincidence could make a part
Of such corruption. This honest Iago
Is a man foreshortened by perspective
Who subtly takes the lines across the stage
To draw attention to his outer self.
Within his span is all of Shakespeare's size.
Neville and Burton interact like tides:
Othello crying horror of his acts
Ends with the bitter antics of the play,
While Iago acting horror in his cries
Plays out the bitter antic to the end.

Now that it's over they can drop pretence,
Unlearn the lesson once the curtain's down
And then, without rehearsal, take a rôle
In acts less public than these five to-night.

So with a spinnaker of grace we ran
Before what wind they chose. Their will was ours.
And as the clapping sounds along the shore,
We come to harbour. That was a voyage!
Now we discover place and day and time –
And, with surprise, our patient watching selves.

CREDO

THEA HUNT

I have believed in suns that cast their rays
From high Olympus; heard Zeus decree
His orizons, where Aphrodite's ways –
Illuminated vistas – wandered free.

I have believed – and it was easier so –
In Socrates, who threw the mountains down
And made them molehills; I revered Plato
Who turned love's fiercest rages to a frown.

I have believed, but that has long been dead,
That man was saved by looking on a Cross;
And then I heard – but it is no more said –
That in a human sacrifice died loss.

Now I must watch my world become a map
Uncharted, and familiar boundaries cease
To bridle passions in an old god's lap.
The new god leans and tells me this is peace.

ETERNITY IS SWIFT

W. H. BOORE

Eternity is swift; I know it so;
I was eternal just one hour ago;
But am no longer. For then she seemed to smile.
How strange the change in such a little while.

And life is long; I see it now extend
Into the gloom before me without end.
Yet should she return; and should she smile again –
The change how strange that I should welcome then.

MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER

SIR FRANCIS MEYNELL

I

Alice Meynell was not only a poet herself: she was the cause of poetry in others. I begin with a few of the verses which others have written about her.

Francis Thompson wrote his many love-poems to my mother: here, these lines from 'Her Portrait' must stand for the rest:

> Oh, but the heavenly grammar did I hold
> Of that high speech which angels' tongues turn gold!
> So should her deathless beauty take no wrong,
> Praised in her own great kindred's fit and cognate tongue:
> Or if that language yet with us abode
> Which Adam in the garden talked with God!
>
> * * *
>
> How should I gauge what beauty is her dole
> Who cannot see her countenance for her soul,
> As birds see not the casement for the sky?
> And, as 'tis check they prove its presence by,
> I know not of her body till I find
> My flight debarred the heaven of her mind.
> Hers is the face whence all should copied be,
> Did God make replicas of such as she;
>
> * * *
>
> And on this lady's heart, looked you so deep,
> Poor Poetry has rocked himself to sleep:
> Upon the heavy blossom of her lips
> Hangs the bee Musing; nigh her lids eclipse
> Each half-occulted star beneath that lies;
> And, in the contemplation of those eyes,
> Passionless passion, wild tranquillities.

And here is a verse which Coventry Patmore wrote to her, entitled 'Alicia':

> Ah, sole essential good of earth,
> And sweetest accident of Heaven,
> Their best rays, on her lucky birth,
> Beamed from the planets seven.
>
> Her body, too, is so like her –
> Sharp honey assuaged with milk,
> Straight as a stalk of lavender,
> Soft as a rope of silk.

And now some lines from a sonnet written to her by George Meredith, who held the iris to be the flower-symbol of her mixture of display and reserve:

For reasons known to us we give the name
'Alicia Coerulea' to that flower,
Sweet as the Sea-born borne on the sea-wave:
That innocent in shame where is no shame;
The proud Reluctant; that fair slave of power,
Who conquers most when she is most the slave.

About my mother's voice, by Katharine Tynan:

Lovely and lingering voice
Lutes, dulcimers, hautboys –
  Her voice remembers how the music went,
Hath caught the rise and fall,
The sob ecstatical
  Of some most heavenly-sweet wind-instrument.

A summing-up in four lines of her work by Victoria Sackville-West:

Her thought was stone: O frugal poet, hard
  Cuts the spare chisel on each separate gem –
Jasper and onyx, emerald and sard:
  Craft and integrity have fashioned them.

A poem by Sir George Rostrevor Hamilton, entitled 'The Library, Greatham (a Memory of Alice Meynell)':

There on the hearth a wink of wood-fire glows,
  But through the door a breath of wildwood Spring
Along the litter of the table flows
  Silverly to the wall, illumining
Those bookshelves where, no less serene and cool,
Wisdom and song still keep their quiet school.

And still her presence is familiar there
  And still remote; coming and going feet
And voices bringing in the garden air
  Make with her other world a world complete;
While, tender with compassion, her dark eyes
Cease not from intercourse with distant skies.

And finally a portrait in prose by Sir John Squire:

I, one of many who were honoured by her kindness and benefited by her wisdom, shall carry her gracious memory to the grave. There, in her London flat or in the ample library-living room of her country cottage, she would sit in her corner: a woman with unwhitened hair, very upright and calm. Her skin was withered with age, but her eyes were large and lustrous; at seventy she still gave an impression of youth and beauty. She was usually in black, her only little coquetry a velvet ribbon around her neck. She sat quiet, Roman dignity in her mien, vivacity, feeling, mockery, sympathy in her eyes: a saint and a sibyl smoking a cigarette: with a young girl's sensitiveness, an old woman's insight, a man's strength. She listened tolerantly to conversation, but

> flashed at a word of brutality. Her own remarks were brief, wise, humorous, full of 'the scorn of scorn, the hate of hate, the love of love'.

What was Alice Meynell's context? Of her father, who loved both scholarship and the arts, but, being without ambition was also without achievement – of her father she wrote after his death:

> He was not inarticulate, he was only silent. He had an exquisite style from which to refrain. His personality made laws for me; it was a subtle education.

And now as to her mother: Christiana Weller was her mother's name, and she had beauty and talent, and when, in 1844, Dickens heard her play the piano at one of his public readings he wrote:

> I cannot joke about Miss Weller, for she is too good; and interest in her (spiritual young creature that she is) has become a sentiment with me. Good God, what a madman I should seem if the incredible feeling I have conceived for that girl could be made plain to anyone.

He said he couldn't joke about Miss Weller. But he could. For he visited her and wrote this jingle in her album:

> I put in a book once by hook and by crook
> The whole race (as I thought) of a feller
> Who happily pleased the town's taste much diseas'd
> And the name of this person was Weller.
>
> I find to my cost that one Weller I lost,
> Cruel destiny so to arrange it!
> I love her dear name which has won me some fame
> But, Great Heaven, how gladly I'd change it!

And it was Dickens who introduced her to his great friend, T. J. Thompson. This Thompson and my grandmother fell in love, and married, and had two children – Alice, my mother, and Elizabeth who won much fame, that has not endured, as a painter, Lady Butler. My grandparents took their children to Italy, and brought them up there: and through all my mother's life it was from Italy – its skies and trees and architecture – that she renewed and refreshed herself.

My mother disliked intensely being classified as one of the two, or three, or four (according to the views of the writer) finest English 'poetesses'. She claimed to write and she offered herself to be criticized, not as a woman – all-woman as she was – but as a poet. And how real was that double claim, to be a woman in her life and a poet in her work, you must judge by two things: first, by the fact that she enjoyed a most happy married life through forty-five years and bore eight children: and second, by her poems and her prose.

Alice Meynell was, as you will have gathered, one of the most loved and revered women of her day – a longish day, beginning in

1847 and ending in 1922, when she was just seventy-five years old. She had her personal, her family life – and her literary life. But no, there were three literary lives: the period of her early poems; the middle period when she was writing the essays; and, thirdly, the period of her later poems.

When she was twenty-eight her first poems were recommended for publication by George Eliot, and won the praises of Ruskin and Aubrey de Vere and Henry Taylor, and the cautious approval of Tennyson. Her young poetry was of course musical and sentimental; but her later was packed tight with thought and suggestion. Here is an example of the first – the sonnet which Ruskin said was the most beautiful ever written by a woman. She told me thirty years later: 'How much more pleased I should have been if he had said merely "a good sonnet"'!

I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight –
The thought of thee – and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song.
O just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never, come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away –
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

This is young poetry. Later she would gladly have withdrawn it, but her public and her husband would not have it so. Here was the only large and lasting dispute, I think, between my parents.

My mother's view of poetry, in its heyday of Victorian grandiloquence, when there was a special poet's vocabulary, is told in a lovely later poem. In this Alice Meynell compares the similes, raptures, metaphors, the 'fair and fragrant things' of poetry, to the Epiphany kings laden with gold and frankincense and myrrh. But the finest poetry, she says, is at the journey's end:

Plain, behind oracles, it is: and past
All symbols, simple; perfect, heavenly-wild,
The song some loaded poets reach at last –
The kings that found a Child.

Do you share my feelings that she herself here reaches that inner simplicity? –

The song some loaded poets reach at last –
The kings that found a Child.

And do you discover the artifice of the verse: not forced on you but upholding the lines – the alliteration of 'song' and 'some', of 'loaded' and 'last' – the heavy repeated vowel of *loa*ded and po*e*t . . .

So her early poems brought her first fame. A success, an excitement: and then, silence. True it was the noisy silence of the nursery, and of anonymous tasks in journalism. Then, fourteen years later, in 1889, she began to write essays in the magazines. It is hard to imagine to-day the excitement that those essays caused, and the praise and fame and friends they won for my mother. Max Beerbohm was driven to protest . . . 'Enthusiasm for the Queen,' he wrote in 1896, 'is easy to understand. She is our monarch, and she has reigned for sixty years, and so we love her. But who made Mrs. Meynell a ruler over us?' 'She is in danger,' he protested, 'of becoming a substitute for the English sabbath!'

That was her second fame – as an essayist: with that whole generation of great critics, headed by Henley, Patmore and George Meredith, eager to promote and proclaim it. She loved their praise, but never lost her head. 'You are always to know,' she wrote to Patmore about a rhapsody in her honour by Francis Thompson, 'you are always to know that I am not a goose.' At this middle-time of life she writes little poetry, and the critics are not interested in it: it is her prose which compels them.

Thus in the early nineties her girlhood's poems were almost forgotten, and her – to me – magnificent later poems, written in the last decade of her life, were yet to come. Her contemporaries who made her middle fame worshipped her for her prose. It is sad to realize that they never knew the full and finest flowering of her mind in those last poems. For these critics, her elders, die, and she becomes old, and suddenly in the last ten years of her life she becomes a poet again, more, much more, of a poet than she had ever been; and a new generation of readers, led by a new generation of critics – Sir John Squire, Drinkwater, Chesterton, Garvin – find her a third and fulfilled fame.

But long before this she had married, and in fourteen years bore eight children, of whom I was the last.

End of Part One

OUR PRIZE POEMS

The first poem on the following page, 'Sea Wrack', by Pamela Cleaver, and the poem on page 137, 'Transfiguration', by Joyce Evelegh, shared the Premium Prize No. 26, reported in the April-June issue. Also the poem 'Two Seasons', by Irene Clements – see page 148 – is a runner-up in the Mendip Prize Competition announced in January-March.

THREE POEMS

PAMELA CLEAVER

SEA WRACK

Beyond where the frill of an ebbing tide
Fades in the blue sky-mirrored sand,
And momently the running feet
Scatter clear brightness on either hand;
Inshore, where the morning's strongest wave,
In a smother of roistering snow-bright foam
Leaves drifted weed in a scalloped line,
In sun and wind content I roam.
Here lie rich jewels of sea-changed glass,
Deep amber, topaz and jade's grape-green;
Fine rose pink shells still frailly hinged,
Limpets lined with smooth tartan sheen;
And here a seabird's salt-clean bones,
So beautiful – so finely wrought;
And there a board half sunk in sand,
Telling the tarred name of a foreign port.

FEBRUARY NIGHT

Stamp off the snow and leave your thick coats in the hall,
Enter the low room with the firelight on the wall,
And forget that, out of doors, in the frozen star-pierced night,
Silently the snowdrops stand, in their thin green and white.

BARROW FLOWERS

When I see the first short-stemmed primroses,
Their pink stalks prisoned close and tied with bass,
And each tight nosegay craftily displayed,
As though the wide-eyed tufts of flowers
Were reconciled to the coster's cart
And the sooty subterfuge of growing
On green so very unlike grass:
Why should I then feel so ashamed,
As though by some crass, cheap remark
I'd uncovered, to those who cannot feel,
The hidden truth that is my friend?

ON THE WAY TO CALIFORNIA

LORD DUNSANY

To the land of the little humming-birds and the mocking-bird I go;
To the mile-long beds of geraniums that bright in the sunlight show
Till evening comes to the houses there and their mellow windows glow;

To the groves of the golden orange; to the yuccas turning fair,
The glaring frown of the desert, like a smile caught unaware
On a face too grim for smiling, till you saw that the smile was there;

To the fair bright lawns by the houses where tall and white all day
Like a ghost in delicate muslin rises the jet of spray
That holds the green which Mojavé would otherwise sweep away;

To the land of the world-famed forests where the old brown giants stand
That stood while the Iliad was written; to the bay of the singing sand;
To the land that the sun looks last on – and I know no fairer land;

Where the City of San Francisco with its golden gate is aglow
Like the friendly hearts of the people, whose welcome travellers know
Whether they come from the sunny East or out of the lands of snow;

Where Man's most wonderful outpost, the mountain of Palomar,
With a new eye looks all night from the earth, to where faint clusters are
Whole universes floating beyond what we thought was the furthest star;

To the land of the bears and cities, for both of them still survive.
And whether the cities of men will last, or the bears remain alive,
I cannot tell in these troubled years, but I hope that they both may thrive.

TWO SEASONS

IRENE CLEMENTS

Time, you did know her, your days enfold her,
Her Spring and Summer, Autumn you did bear,
Warm blood and flush of youth were in your care.

Can Spring and Winter mingle in the year,
Frail blossoms clasp the bare wood, aged and sere?
The song-bird sing of Love when snows appear?

Wise Winter has a garner filled with grain,
The fruits of former months her lofts retain,
With evergreens, red berries in the lane.

Young Spring's untaught, a fledgling out of nest;
A daffodil in yellow robe, new dressed;
A milky lamb, fresh from her mother's breast.

Time, loose your hold, consent to season's play!
For roses have enhanced a Winter's day,
And jewelled frosts adorned the fields of May.

RETIREMENT OF THE ROYAL GARDENER

PETER REDGROVE

To meet a rose called
Black fire, there should be
Dark garments for the princess.

The tall flower with the
White expression and red throat
Dipped like a pitcher in the wind.
My nimbling fingers made easy

Soft and deep nine lax
Dynasties. Affectionate lips
Strained up from the brown bed,
Blooms coveted the animal palm of the breeder.

Nine summers wrang out
Their hot winds and vivid buildings;
Nine green necks, heavy-headed,
Snapped in

The milliard insurrection of autumn.
Exiled seed
In green caves and footholes
Aligned for new tinctures, barbaric empiries.

Now let the bright pictures fall
Where they will,
The brilliant heads toss
Over their gaming.

THE POETRY OF PHOEBE HESKETH

HERBERT PALMER

None of the preceding centuries has been quite so prolific of good women-poets as this, though it has only half-run its course. One of the names that assuredly will be remembered and honoured in the future is that of Phoebe Hesketh, a poet at present less read and known than is her due. Her first book, youthful and experimental, was published with a small northern publisher in 1939. After that came the volumes of a more or less ripened maturity: *Lean Forward Spring* (1948), *No Time for Cowards* (1952), *Out of the Dark* (1954), and now *Between Wheels and Stars** – a total of more than three hundred pages.

I would confidently place Phoebe Hesketh among the first half-score prominent women-poets of this century, and it is likely that in years to come she will be ranked with the first two or three, for her verse is not only distinguished for its melody but also for frequent profundity of thought, memorable phrasing and variety of imagination and diction, traditional though never hide-bound by tradition, new in its general tones yet rarely eccentric; and while she is very conscious of the queer world in which she lives she is never led astray by its ugliness and glitter and vulgarity.

Among those who have acclaimed her are Roy Campbell, Richard Church, Siegfried Sassoon and Professor C. S. Lewis, all of them unanimous as to her unusual powers. Roy Campbell, in the course of one of the most enthusiastic reviews ever granted to a poet, wrote: 'Her emotional power is balanced by her intellectual resources,' and that is the kernel of the matter, for her brain is well married to her heart, her vision to her verbal powers and disciplined understanding.

She has been compared with Emily Brontë, though her diction is rarely similar, for Emily Brontë's favourite contemporary poet seems to have been Byron. But all that is as it should be, for Phoebe Hesketh naturally uses the poetical idioms of this century. Her resemblance to Emily Brontë has been brought about by her environment, for she lives on the outermost fringe of an ugly industrial district in south-west Lancashire at the foot of a steep fell, many miles of moorland wilderness to east and north. It is similar to the Haworth district except that the valley is not quite so treeless. Of the most barren part of her environment she has written:

> Heather and bent and bog, an obstinate thorn
> Screwed to the way of the wind, denying the sun.
> No one cares for the starveling blossom unblown;
> Nobody cares for love in a land of stone.

**Between Wheels and Stars*, by Phoebe Hesketh (Heinemann, 12s. 6d.).

This is the theme to which she frequently returns, a sombre landscape described or suggested by Emily Brontë more often in her novel *Wuthering Heights* than in her poems. But Phoebe Hesketh also writes of the woodland and valley, as in 'Spring Song':

> The dead rise up and speak with golden tongues –
> A crocus, yellow-billed, proclaims the sun;
> And here are celandines
> Whose starry sayings set the grass alight.

And lambs and wild deer run and gambol through her pages, symbols of shyness and tenderness, while predatory birds and beasts try to upset her glimpses of the Garden of Eden.

She is a poet of Nature, a sensitive observer and absorber, her eyes continually set on natural phenomena. In this she links with such poets as Wordsworth and Clare, except that she often complains of the destructive developments of modern civilization. Her new book illustrates these reactions the most often. In the lyric which gives the title, though it is by no means the best thing in the book, she writes:

> Caught between wheels and stars our course is run
> And we are searching blindfold all the way.

And in a neighbouring poem she reiterates:

> A generation torn from maternal earth
> And born between the wheels can never know
> The slow green pulse that beats through natural birth.

Parallel to pastoral Nature, and sometimes intertwined, is the theme of Love – erotic, platonic, spiritual and maternal – so many of its aspects. But it is of loss rather than satisfaction which she so often writes, though Christian philosophy creeps in to soften suffering:

> O happy boy, the cold and senseless ground
> Cannot possess you as a thing of clay;
> These plotted fields no more contain your play;
> Joy is not bounded by a hedge or wall;
> Your boundless playground slopes beyond us all.

That extract, from one of the many poems written after the death of a young son by drowning, points to the calm centre which should be at the heart of all Christian suffering. In her advice to lovers there is the same kind of attitude:

> Grieve not because your lover finds
> His joy beyond your want of him;
> Detention kills the thing that binds –
> O loose your hold, the flame burns dim!
>
> * * * *
>
> Weep not because your lover seeks
> Truth that informs and lights the heart.

Of love itself to one of her most beautiful, most exuberant, and strangely worded lyrics she is even more explicit:

> Love alone can mend
> The arrowed heart, make Sorrow's blood-drops yield
> Soil and seed for the Immortal rose.

Beyond all those there is the Creator, God, who is the cause of it all and is never deaf or blind to those who invoke Him.

> He who formed the ear, does He not hear?
> And He who made the eye does He not see
> Beyond our infant sight
> Till dark, aware of darkness, becomes light?

Phoebe Hesketh has been called a Georgian Poet, or a belated Georgian, and though she reveals a few of the Georgian characteristics, especially if we judge the Georgians as a team of writers and look upon Georgianism as a new movement, even as an assigned, pastoral movement, it is an insufficient classification. Whereas the most typical Georgians landed into a cul de sac so that the movement was unable to develop, Phoebe Hesketh's verse has climbed over the barring wall, bearing witness to so many of those qualities and characteristics which the generality of Georgians lacked or were deliberately arrested for these parties seemed to dislike everyone or anything of a non-committal character, anything that would rivet the attention of eye and ear upon parts of the lyric rather than upon the lyric as a whole. In this they were partly influenced by the early Yeats, the Yeats of the Celtic Twilight period, especially in their horror of abstract – which was certainly a Yeatsian obsession. Nevertheless, the term or label 'Georgian' should cease to be a term of reproach, for, whatever his later developments, Walter de la Mare is plainly a Georgian poet. To-day it is de la Mare rather than T. S. Eliot whose position is never challenged as a poet.

Another peculiarity of the Georgians was their prosaic attitude, their avoidance of religion and ethics and everything in the nature of strife, of the conflict between good and evil, light and darkness. But these dualities of moral conflict are such obvious ingredients of Phoebe Hesketh's verse that I feel tempted to compare her with the Wagner of the religious music-dramas, and am sometimes reminded of his overture to Tannhauser. Her verse is so crowded with conflicts, the struggle between the Christian God and the pagan Fate, between external Nature and that which is behind Nature, between erotic love and spiritual love, between self and the Absolute. The settled tendency and tranquillity of many of her poems does not blot out her thunderstorms, and perhaps her future development will be towards greater confidence of vision, though without losing anything of her

alluring humanity. As a natural result of some of her turbulence and hesitation she is occasionally somewhat obscure and writes confused lines like:

> Only the wind and the moon endure through change;
> The sombre moor remains the same for ever.

Even supposing 'moon' to be a misprint for 'moor' (and the moon is a frequent symbol in her verse) the lines hardly bear thoughtful investigation.

But such defects are few, and sometimes only microscopic inspection can detect them, because her verse is carried on her voice and the page responds to the ear of the reader. Infrequent too, are her passages which echo other poets; and of these, in all her books, I have tracked down only three – one from Yeats, one from Belloc, and one from Osbert Sitwell. There are no echoes from Keats, though the lushness of some of the verse in *No Time for Cowards* makes it nearly certain that she has enjoyed him. The same cannot be said of Heine because she knows no German, though the technical affinities to Heine in some of her simplest singing lyrics, especially those written in conversational idiom, are rather obvious.

Horseback riding, hunting the hare, hill and mountain climbing are the chiefest of this outdoor poet's outdoor amusements. But the second is never alluded to, and her humanitarianism makes it clear that killing wild-life is distasteful to her. Elevated landscape, however, occurs again and again in her verse; therefore as a good example of one of her best moments of originality approaching perfection and in verse that combines symbolism with material actuality (as so often) let me close with 'Mountain Top', the last lyric in her new book.

> At last we know
> The kestrel moment, pinned on the mountain air –
> Hands, feet, all left behind on the topmost stair
> Of bent endeavour.
>
> Here we are found
> Lifted above the treadmill of the ground,
> Winged beyond hope, born of a blue desire
> For flight.
>
> We are fire and air
> And have conquered the grey and green and purple miles
> Till valleys, villages, and streams below
> Dwindle like dreams before an opened door;
> And bridges, railways, footpaths spiked with stiles
> All, all are drowned in swollen yesterdays;
> But we in a tower of air are bodies no more.

THREE POEMS

PHOEBE HESKETH

TO THE GREAT LOVER

O Love, support me over burning stones
And shield me from the stream where I would drink –
The throbbing stream of life, lest I should dip
One disobedient finger-tip and sink
Below the pinnacle of Your embrace.

O Love, my course is set above the stream;
My feet are on the rock; my eyes discern
The sun wherein I burn; I dare not dream
Of water smoothing down this granite face.

Each blinding day of light, each blinded night
Must be endured while I am Yours to die
To this weak body and its strong desire.
Earth-rooted like a tree, I sweep the sky
To wrench my roots from where their strength is set.

Yet still I hear the stream, the moving leaves,
And the primrose wind that breathes of pagan Spring
Till the primal satyr in my nature grieves
And listens to the song it dare not sing.

O Love, a little while and I will know
What country shines beyond my glimmering faith;
Though now there is so short a way to go,
I need Your strength to fill my lack of breath,
Your love for all the loves I must forego,
Your life to lift my soul beyond its death.

TIGER AND ROSE

There is one perfection of the tiger
And another of the rose.
Each one in unselfconscious beauty grows
True to its kind, and good
After its own fashion.
But fogged by knowledge and experiment,
No man knows the answer to this life.
Mind like a climber fighting blind through snows
Wins glimpses of the peaks before they close
In slow, bewildering mist.

Out of Love's hand uncoiled the tiger,
Out of His mouth the rose uncurled,
And man, His image, is not wiser
For asking why He made the world.

There is one perfection of the eye
And another of the ear.
And who are we, caught between earth and sky,
To judge of what is hidden and yet near
And intimate as breath?
We see and hear in part,
And seek perfection in the mortal heart,
But cannot find such Love this side of death.

LINKED

He who formed the ear, shall He not hear?
And He who made the eye, can He not see
Beyond our infant sight
Till dark, aware of darkness, becomes light ?

He who made man from the dust and breathed
The breath of life in him, is He not ours
As we are His beyond our power to know?
Yet, cowards all, we grow
Barriers around our lives to shut Him out
Because we fear His breath of love will blow
Our mean desires into a dying smoke
Till we are destitute of all but Him.

SEA SONG

ELIZABETH LANSDELL

'Pretty child, come to me,
I'll give you pearls to wear,
shells to adorn your eyes;
bright fishes as they rise
shall part your hair.
See, you shall share
gold of forgotten ships;
green tides shall kiss your lips,
finding them fair.
Cool shall your cradle be
child, come to me!'

THE PUNDIT

HERBERT BLUEN

Upon the poets you expatiate
With ponderous omniscience and zeal,
Their virtues and their vices you collate,
With academic impudence you steal
Languors and lightnings of some deathless muse,
Bedevil them with commentaries wise,
While other pundits learned enthuse
And eulogize your sapience to the skies.
A sponge, your mind absorbs what genius penned
To exorcize some unrelenting woe,
Or to express a joy that you, my friend,
Could never hope to understand or know,
Whose thoughts made costive by your self-esteem
Serve but as footnotes to a poet's theme.

SUMMER REVOLUTION

DIANA SHELLEY

No more shall the scythe sweep surely
Through the soft grass,
Swift whisper of death,
Sibilant, sharp.
No more the bent body swing
Arm and scythe in a single grace,
Slicing the slender, supple stems,
Bearded as old men, white with pride,
Or finely speckled as sunbeam dust.
No more shall the swaythes sink silently
To lie in pallid ranks:
Still to the wind's breath.
No more the startled skylark rise
Suddenly with a scatter of wings,
Flickering, mounting fear . . .

Scabbed with rust, the idle scythe
Lies in briars by the barn's edge,
Blunter now than the curved thorns
Wind-tossed, which jab and claw,
Spattering the grass with ancient blood.

Staccato now the tractor stutters
In maladjusted irritation
Of some martial monster constrained
(Having tasted bloodier battle)
By pale vegetarian carnage;
Tamed and harnessed in subjection
To domestic servitude.
Tossed and tumbled sprawl the grasses,
Torn in noisy revolution
From their graceful, gentle living,
Mutilated vulgarly
Without ancient rite of death.

SECOND ENCOUNTER

GILBERT THOMAS

Pilate awoke in some far bourne,
Bewildered. At his side,
No longer mocked or crowned with thorn,
There stood the Crucified.

Pain and relief, doubt, hope and fear
All met in startled eyes,
Till Jesus said: 'Be of good cheer,
You are in Paradise.

'Come! share with me the realm of light
Who shared my suffering' . . .
'Then what I wrote, nor would re-write,
Was true: you were the King!

'I half believed it. On that score –
Assuming I had power
To match my will – earth blames me more.
Alas! in that grim hour

'When, calmly bearing such wild hate,
You stirred my sympathy,
I could but reason, not dictate:
My hand was never free' . . .

'Did I not know? More honour, then,
That you dared intercede
For one outcast by righteous men
Of his own race and creed;

'That, even when I touched the claim
Of your Imperial pride,
You strove, assessing my pure aim,
To check the frenzied tide;

'That, after my disciples fled,
And utter seemed the night,
You, out of pagan darkness, shed
A solitary light.

'There was for you no Easter sun,
Illumining the Way.
Would that as boldly all might run
The course – in open day.'

'DEAR EDITORS – '

(The opinions expressed in the following Letters from Readers are not necessarily those of *The Poetry Review*.)

DETACHMENT?

In your January-March 1956 issue, Geoffrey Johnson criticizes Robert Conquest's poems as lacking in feeling. Still, one doesn't always want one's emotions aroused, and I, a mere reader, liked the 'Landscapes' immensely, precisely for their air of tranquil timelessness. Whether Mr. Conquest describes the barren tundra, or a sun-dried limestone gorge, one has the scene entirely to oneself; is free to sit still and stare, and to inhale great draughts of space with all the leisure in the world. One mingles at will with his polyglot Balkan types, or remains an onlooker on the far fringe of the jostling, colourful crowd. Such an atmosphere of detachment is rare and refreshing in these days of noise:

> And when the first craft, fairly soon,
> Its rockets flaring, noses down
> To total strangeness under Deimos' glitter

I hope Mr. Conquest is on board to describe the Martian landscape to us!

ELLEN E. H. REDKNAP

'MODERN POETRY AND METAPHYSICS'

May I be allowed to say that although I liked Stuart Holroyd's article I must disagree with him when he writes that what is ugly, evil and deformed, is even a 'darker aspect of Reality.' Surely, these things are shadows – cast by man getting in the way of the sun? Evil is a falling away from Truth – which is Reality. God is Reality. Avaunt Dualism! I like Dorothy Sayers' definition of sin as a state of 'active negation' – and I go the whole way with Jacob Boehme in affirming that only the Good, the Beautiful and the Truth are Real – the fallings away, like dark shadows, are ever-changing and temporal.

P.H.

ON THE SEASHORE

W. J. SEDERGREEN

Dark dost thou sit, O Hour,
  Stern in this place,
Holding in graven hands
  Thy brooding face.

Sightless thine eyes and dim
  Searching the dream
Lost in horizon-mist's
  Elusive gleam.

Deaf are thine ears to tales
  Rocks would impart;
Music forsaken haunts
  Thy tortured heart.

Dark dost thou sit, O Hour.
  Thy tears are dry.
Only bewildered waves
  About thee cry.

BRAHMS

MARION SCHOEBERLEIN

It has an autumn flavor in its spell,
This music so like a last bird within
A gray November tree. I am not young
When I listen to the numbness of
The chords. Door after door closes and I
Do not understand his powerful poem!
Yet this I know, a beauty rare and cold
Dwells in his narrow piano playing.
Now, my floor is bare of rugs, my ceiling
Has no end when his notes push me up
Against the sky! I stand in empty halls
Watching for God to come and sit with me
I tremble in the wind and in the storm,
Brahms has a way of speaking like autumn.

SONG UPON NENCIA'S DEATH

KENNETH HARE

(After Lorenzo de' Medici) *

Mourn, who can with grief be shaken;
Mourn, who can be moved with passion,
A lily plucked in grievous fashion;
White Nencia Death has taken.

She'd loves by scores: the jade was fickle,
Yet none seem to mourn her truly;
For her death no tear-drops trickle;
No one's sorrow grows unruly;
Beco once – seeing she looked bluely –
Begged a smile: she let him pillage
All her charms, then turned, and duly
Walked to Prato from the village.

She had eyes could look and languish,
Make you dream upon caresses,
Yet more pricks to give you anguish
Than a hawthorn bush possesses;
Those who came in her good graces,
Soon regretted they had eyed her;
Even her husband watched his paces:
Dared not stand too close beside her!

Then this sickness from the Devil
Took her, this accurséd fever –
The 'moría' they call this evil –
Vain the leech's art to save her;
Death was quick; her husband never
Stayed nor strove with Death to grapple;
He dropped: when East winds make us shiver,
So falls – *thud!* – a shaken apple.

Can't you hear the village chatter? –
'Look! their geese are in the meadow' –
'And the pigs!' – 'A fearsome matter
To see beasts behave as they do!' –

* (Reacting against the Medievals who had abstracted and spiritualized in their delineations of women, the Humanists go directly to Nature. Nencía, a village woman – amorous, beautiful, but a shrew – has been carried off by the plague, with her husband Vallera and their man Beco. An ironical lament).

'Beco's caught it too I say, do
You think else he'd scant his labours?' –
'Will he die of it?' – 'He may do' –
'Heavy, heavy matters, Neighbours!' –

No more songs! the wench had metal,
She could sing, although she chided,
Art cannot redeem a petal
Of the rose that earthward glided;
Never dreamt she ill betided;
By her wheel her wools were lying;
Tow and flax she had provided;
She had thought of all: but dying!

Go, my Song, and with a greeting
To my friends, those brisk bold fellows,
Say, 'Live fully: Life is fleeting;
Gaily, for a green leaf yellows;'
He who sighs like any bellows,
Strive to make him give grief over,
And wish, Song, wish, before youth mellows,
'Joy and bliss to every lover!'

THE STARRY NIGHT

WILFRID THORLEY

O brighter than a sickle-blade
The moon is shining! Silver doves
From starry branches serenade
Their heavenly loves.

The Milky Way's a sudden mist
Of wings from a white flock that fills
With star-dust all the air like grist
From heavenly mills.

And there's a spate and sudden spray
Beneath the flock that wheels and veers
As though the stream had broke a way
Through heavenly weirs.

Look up and see the sickle! See
The silver doves, the silver stream,
And all the night's immensity
One silver dream!

A HOUSE IN QUIET STREET

JON WYNNE-TYSON

Bath buns, lavender tea, and very thin china
Placed with an infinite care
On very thin legs of a table,
Matched by a very thin chair.

Two very thin old ladies, a flurry of old-time lace,
Erect as their spindled treasures,
Precise as their chiming clock,
Pour the important measures
At a slow-time, old-time pace.

WITH YOU IN MIND

HUGH FREWEN

How oft in counsel with the worldly-wise
I sought the Faith, but never reached to God,
Until I took religion from your eyes,
And made your beauty my divining rod!
With you in mind the lamp of life shines bright
And earth puts on its most translucent hue,
Nature is radiant with golden light,
And all things worthy are transmuted new!
There is no symbol in the world of art,
No deep abstraction of the human mind,
That in communion with your loving heart
I cannot by your inspiration find,
For this is true all other truth above –
You are my temple of the god of love!

THE GLEANER

JOSEPHINE OGLE

I watched her as she stooped to glean the ears,
with poppies in her hair.
Gold as the corn her arms
and bare.
I wondered which of Nature's tempting schemes
would bring more sorrow
or cause more tears,
she, or the pipe
to drug delusion's fears.

'THE WILD COLONIAL BOY'

STEPHEN GRAHAM

Australian Bush Ballads, edited by Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing (Angus & Robertson, 30s.).

An Anthology of New Zealand Verse, selected by Robert Chapman and Jonathan Bennett (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 21s.).

Over a hundred years ago Australia had her own poet laureate, and he received an annual fee of two cows. That reward in itself suggests the bush ballads, the ballads of the pioneers and the 'outback'. The colony in its early days felt the need of expression in song and rhyme. Poetry makes a nation, and the sense of nationhood both in Australia and New Zealand must owe something to popular verse. In return their poetry owes something to the inspiration of the old country. Douglas Stewart, one of the editors of *Australian Bush Ballads* gives it as his pet theory that the Australian balladists were a reincarnation of the rhymers of the Scottish Border and that 'the old power of song leapt to life again in the wild freedom of a new country'. Adam Lindsay Gordon, A. B. Paterson, Will H. Ogilvie were all Scots. Curiously enough in the Anthology of New Zealand verse before us we have John Barr writing directly in Scots dialect:

> I was fed on parritch thin,
> My taes they stickit thro' my shoon,
> I ruggit at the pouken pin
> But couldna mak it pay, sirs.

But the Australian ballads are all in English. There is another John Barr represented there and his language is very different:

> When you get down to Sidney-side
> Where do you reckon to reside?
> Where will you bunk and grub?
> 'Gorstruth', says Bill, '*you* oughter know!
> When I get inter town – What-o!
> I'm stopping at the pub.

Ballads are poems to be sung or ranted inside or outside public houses, at fairs, at jollifications, in camps and 'midst the riot of the shearers in the shed! Most of them are meant to be declaimed while others are suited to a melancholy sing-song and the accompaniment of the banjo. Douglas Stewart and Nancy Keesing have made a fine collection.

There is a real wealth of literary curiosities in this big volume, and many fetching ballads which might otherwise be hard to come by in England. The ballads will find their way into many homes and will be read aloud with glee. There are pages for lonely folk to gloat over by the fireside on long winter evenings, and others which could be taken to a party and declaimed with great success. I think the reader needs to have had one or

two drinks before he embarks on some of them, but once he is in the mood and can make the words sound loud enough he is likely to have a roaring acclaim and be applauded rapturously by the assembled company.

It is difficult to pick and choose, as everyone has his own taste in these matters, but among the best I name 'Father Riley's Horse', 'Making a Champion', 'The Stockman's Cheque', 'Bill Jinks', 'The Man from Ironbark' and 'A Curious Reminiscence'. The great medium for publishing Australian ballads in the first place seems to have been 'The Sydney Bulletin', but many of the names listed as authors of these verses became well known in England – E. W. Hornung, Edward Dyson, Lindsay Gordon, etc.

Douglas Stewart, himself a poet, wrote the very interesting preface to the collection of ballads. Some of his poetry appears in the *Anthology of New Zealand Verse,* so it is possible he is a New Zealander. This volume does not contain much that could be classified as Ballad – only five pieces by David McKee Wright. New Zealand has no outback, no fabulous and half-unexplored hinterland, and has always been a little more urban than Australia: the percentage of men wearing collars is greater. There is very much less drinking, and therefore less sentimental singing and self-dramatization. As might be expected, its poetry is on the whole more serious and there is some fine verse in this anthology. As an example that by Douglas Stewart himself, entitled 'Mending a Bridge', is very good. Such a poem, if offered to the *Poetry Review* would soon find place in our pages.

Another beautiful poem is 'To L. H. B.' by Katherine Mansfield:

> Last night for the first time since you were dead
> I walked with you, my brother, in a dream.

Some of the poets such as William Pember Reeves would be better appreciated in collected editions rather than anthologies. On the whole this *Anthology of New Zealand Verse* is well worth possessing as a representative contribution to British Commonwealth literature, though not as something identifying the spirit of New Zealand in poetry. The Maoris have not begun writing verse: perhaps that is just as well. But we await some strongly individual expression of the New Zealand nation in poetry.

TOWARDS A RENAISSANCE

DALLAS KENMARE

Amphibian: a Reconsideration of Browning, by Henry Charles Duffin (Bowes, 30s.).

In our spiritually bankrupt age, nothing could be more valuable than a proper understanding of Robert Browning, who, since the derelict period ushered in by the First World War, has been increasingly cold-shouldered. (It is conspicuous how many books of literary criticism published during the last twenty years never refer to him at all.) So Mr. Duffin, in producing such a fine and scholarly reconsideration of Browning has done far more than write an important book; he has made a real contribution to what could well become a spiritual renaissance.

The book is therefore valuable not only for its penetrating analysis of the poetry. How supremely right, for example, are his judgements of 'Pauline' and 'Childe Roland', about which a great deal of pseudo-psychological

nonsense has been written, which Mr. Duffin effectively demolishes. How right, too, the sympathetic section on *The Ring and the Book*, which poem the contemporary 'Athenaeum' called 'the most precious and profound spiritual treasure that England has produced since Shakespeare', and on 'Red-cotton Nightcap Country', an extraordinary work which should dispel for ever the absurd modern notion that Browning was 'Victorian' in the derogatory sense of the word. We cannot imagine any of his contemporaries dealing with such a theme in such a way.

Mr. Duffin's study is full also of comments on Browning himself, his great charm of character, his genius for friendship, and the ideal nature of his marriage. We are also grateful for the annihilating comments on the Freudian school of literary 'criticism', so admirably described as a squalid 'worm's eye view'.

EDITORIAL NOTE.—The attitude of women readers to the poetry of Robert Browning has only rarely been made known. Therefore we have decided to publish in this number two independently written reviews, both by distinguished women-poets, of *Amphibian*, a new book about Browning. Miss Dallas Kenmare (see the foregoing) is the author of *A Modern Approach* to his work, and Mrs. K. V. Richardson's contribution is on page 168.

SIGNIFYING NOTHING

TONY VAN DEN BERGH

Dylan Thomas in America, by John Malcolm Brinnin (Dent, 18s.).

Studying the lives of poets can be helpful. It may well cultivate a greater understanding and therefore a greater appreciation of the poetry itself.

Since the untimely death of Dylan Thomas there has been a plethora of articles written about him, dealing in detail with both his work and his life. There can be no member of the reading public who is now unaware that he was a drunkard; what more does John Malcolm Brinnin add to our knowledge of this fine Welsh poet? The answer is nothing!

Early in his book Mr. Brinnin states that his own work has been much influenced by Dylan Thomas and that critics have remarked on numerous similarities. To justify this claim he tortuously constructs several pseudo-Dylan Thomas sentences. These remind us of Dylan Thomas about as much as watery cold greens do of Strasbourg *foie gras*! The entire book is a relation of drunken outings, interspersed with the poet vomiting, being ill, or making amorous advances to sundry females. Many lesser and less ebullient men than Dylan Thomas would have been driven to these actions by such an American reception as that which Mr. Brinnin provided. The author apparently dragged the wretched Dylan round the drab shadows of the hangers-on in the American art world, enjoying all the time the reflection of his imported genius's glory.

Occasionally Dylan Thomas did meet interesting people, and it is significant to note that these were nearly always at the poet's own request. What does Mr. Brinnin tell us about these meetings of Dylan Thomas's own choosing? Once again, the answer is nothing! Can it be that when Thomas was free for a time from the dreary sycophancy of Mr. Brinnin's friends, and was talking with those he liked, he turned on the toy pomeranian yapping at his heels and said 'Down Fido'? – and Mr. Brinnin thereupon retired into a

corner to bemoan the lack of consideration of the man who had apparently tired of his tedious pretentiousness.

But one must be fair to Mr. Brinnin. One must not give the impression that there is no virtue in him or his book. Apart from the passages of poor imitation, it is capably written, if uninspired. Let us give him full credit. Let us say that as a poet he proves himself a first-rate business man. Undoubtedly these exercises in alcohol, vomiting and sex are bound to rake the shekels in for its shrewd author, so let us admire him for his adroitness – if for nothing else.

THE SEVENTH DAY

F. PRATT GREEN

One Foot in Eden, by Edwin Muir (Faber, 10s. 6d.).
Collected Poems, by Kathleen Raine (Hamish Hamilton, 15s.).
Selected Poems, by Randall Jarrell (Faber, 15s.).

The poetry of Edwin Muir has an architectural quality rare in our time. Each poem is shaped granite that somewhere fits into the growing edifice of his life's work, so that what one admires is not so much the fragmentary beauty of an image, or this poem or that, as a sense of total achievement, even of grandeur in the final effect. This is true of the single volume under review, which has a meditated but not unforced unity. When, for instance, Edwin Muir says in his fine title-poem:

> But famished field and blackened tree
> Bear flowers in Eden never known.
> Blossoms of grief and charity
> Bloom in these darkened fields alone,

he is throwing light on other poems in the book, and in earlier books, and is indeed clarifying the faith that informs all his work. For sombre as Edwin Muir's landscape often is, and unmistakably contemporary, those who walk in it are not tutored in cynicism or despair. The climate is bracing. Without adopting an esoteric system, such as Yeats used, or reverting to the Christian orthodoxy of the later Eliot, poets with whom Muir may justly be compared, he reaches through both pagan and Christian symbols to a personal and undogmatic faith.

This architectural effect owes something to the poet's sparing use of decoration. His images are necessary, his epithets fresh but exact. Here, then, is poetry which nourishes rather than intoxicates. It does not lend itself easily to the purposes of the anthologist; indeed I can think of no anthology which does Edwin Muir justice. This is a pity if it means that he is in danger of being respected but not widely read.

When Kathleen Raine selected her verse in a very welcome volume, *Collected Poems,* she jettisoned much earlier work in favour of *The Year One,* her most recent book, which is here reprinted in full. Poets are apt to have a special affection for what they wrote last week and to feel a revulsion against what they wrote a decade ago. It is the youngest child who is petted and spoilt. One admirer of Miss Raine's poetry, however, much prefers most of her earlier work to the over-formalized and sometimes obvious raptures of

'Love's Spell', 'The Unloved', and 'Amo Ergo Sum', though admitting that poems such as 'Water', and 'Shells' are among her best.

Randall Jarrell, the American poet and critic, is neither philosopher nor mystic. His interest is in things themselves, sometimes too much so, for his poems tend to collapse into witty, or guardedly sentimental, commentaries on people and situations. Certainly the American scene comes alive for us in his vigorous and lucid verse, which is free from those eccentricities of form and language we are tempted to think of as typically American. What, in his case, is lacking?

Perhaps the answer is to be found in the odd fact that both Edwin Muir and Kathleen Raine write poems in praise of the Seventh Day, the day of repose and reflection. The American poet, involved in the six days of creation, has not yet passed, as Mr. Muir puts it:

> Into the day where all are gathered together,
> Things and their names, in the storm's and the lightning's nest,
> The seventh great day and the clear eternal weather.

FROM THE SPANISH

PAUL SELVER

Ten Centuries of Spanish Poetry. An Anthology in English Verse with original texts, and Introductions by Pedro Salinas. Edited by Eleanor L. Turnbull (John Hopkins Univ. Press: Cumberlege, 40s.)

This attractively presented anthology covers a scope which, in terms of English literary history, would range from, say, Langland to Housman, Yeats, and Walter de la Mare. But it is a pity that the generation of 1898, presented here by Unamuno, Antonio Machado, and Jiménez, does not include also Rubén Darío. True, he was born in Nicaragua, but he lived many years in Europe, met with early recognition in Spain, and exercised a considerable influence on Spanish poetry. He was a master of superb word-music, and a version, however imperfect, of his 'Sonatina' or 'Colloquy of the Centaurs', would have added to the interest of this volume.

Nevertheless, here are assembled a hundred and fifty-six items, in Spanish and English, which illustrate the wealth and variety of Spanish poetry from the eleventh century to the end of the nineteenth, as well as the attention which has been devoted to it in America and England for several centuries. Readers who are not yet acquainted with such poets as Juan de la Cruz, Góngora, Lope de Vega, and Calderón, to mention only a few, will find worthy examples of their work, for the most part worthily translated.

In selecting the translations the editor has brought to light many excellent versions which might otherwise have been forgotten. One of the most memorable, the rendering of a Góngora sonnet by Sir Richard Fanshawe, dates back to the seventeenth century. There is also an extract from Calderón, by Richard Chenevix Trench, author of a volume containing translations of two of Calderón's plays – *Life's a Dream* and *The Great Theatre of the World* – with an admirable detailed essay on his life and work, which was published exactly one hundred years ago.

The introductory matter in this anthology is by Pedro Salinas, a Spanish

poet who died before he completed the whole series of notes. They were supplemented by other writers, and are scattered in various parts of the book. Perhaps a more uniform and continuous survey of the subject would have been more suitable for such a volume.

'WHAT IS A DUCHESS IF SHE MISSES IT'

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

Amphibian: A Reconsideration of Browning, by Henry Charles Duffin (Bowes & Bowes, 30s.).
Predilections, by Marianne Moore (Faber & Faber, 18s.).
Painted Lace, by Gertrude Stein, with a preface by Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (Yale Univ. Press, London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 40s.)

My title, which might well have been Alice's Reply, is from *Painted Lace*: Miss Moore's is a frank relegation of pure criticism: Mr. Duffin's is almost stoical in its determination to balance accounts, particularly since the author reveals that a chance encounter with Browning's poetry during student days wholly changed the ambit of his adult life.

In *Amphibian,* he speaks as an enlightened nephew might of a beloved uncle; with tolerance and understanding but with that pride which comes of growing older along with not only the greatness but the goodness of a family hero. The book is immensely 'readable', the relaxed style clothing some penetrating observation. One could wish the sub-title away, although these revaluations have become fashionable. I have a personal fancy that it is the surviving giants, still swinging easily along the Olympic track, who, from time to time, re-assess the humbler relays of the human race, occasionally beckoning a runner to join them.

Browning had almost everything the proverbial genius ought to have except, perhaps, the qualities that want and suffering bring: he had sincerity, loftiness, even nobility, of thought, prosodic brilliance – and yet . . . and yet . . . It is a real regret that for me, so much of his work recalls those Victorian problem-pictures – beautifully executed programme-pieces.

If Browning seems to be found in strange company in this review, one should not forget that he too was once a Modern but with all the social graces which can gentle a lion to The Ladies. And though we can well imagine the spate of parenthesis with which he might have defended himself from Gertrude Stein, who, we are told, possessed 'a calm certitude' (and certainly nothing less could have completed *Painted Lace*), he might have found good conversation with Marianne Moore. I enjoyed her book of essays. Whether one likes what she does in poetry or not, at least she knows what she means to do and how to do it – an achievement of ripeness which has value for other poets.

There are two kinds of essay in this collection: one which deals with technical and qualitative problems in writing, and the other discussing literary personalities. There is also an appreciation of Anna Pavlova. Instead of the usual copious notes, we have a list of errata. Rather a pity, this, but it all goes to build up what George Barker calls 'the face behind the poem' just as from Duffin's book one reconstructs the poem behind the face.

While Browning, for some, reflects Leighton, Stein is the literary counterpart

of Gris and Picasso. Mr. Kahnweiler's introduction indicates this and other helpful details in a few pages of biographical background. But behold – it all turns out to be the camel straining at a gnat yet once more. And not for nothing is that long-suffering animal known as the ship of the desert. I quote:

> Can we be certain to be pleased.
> I think so
> Can we rely on you
> They have had so many disappointments.
> But not with me.

I disagree, except with the penultimate line.

Here and there truth flashes momentarily as any kind of automatic writing will sometimes uncover a diamond in the sand . . . but oh, the dust!

One would have liked both Browning's and Stein's reactions to Moore's aphorisms on sentence construction: 'Expanded explanation tends to spoil the lion's leap . . . an awkwardness which is brought home . . . in conversation!' 'We must be as clear as our natural reticence allows us to be'. And speaking of reticence, let me not be the one to cast the first Stein.

WINE AND WATER

F. PRATT GREEN

In the Fire, by Thomas Blackburn (Putnam, 7s. 6d.).
The Witnesses and Other Poems, by Clive Sansom (Methuen, 8s. 6d.).

The difference between these two poets is startling; it is not unlike the difference between wine and water. If your taste is for wine, you probably despise water. It is a question of taste. The wine, anyhow, may not be the blushful Hippocrene, the water may not be very bright.

What Thomas Blackburn gives us is wine. His poetry goes to the head, a not unpleasant sensation. The trouble is that the more you read the greater becomes the effort to understand what is being said. Does it really matter if a good time is being had by all? Struggling back to rationality, you ask what produced this state. The flow of the verse, you notice, has a hypnotic monotony:

> Because their deaf, unnatural sense
> Despised the prompting of the heart,
> The Theban woman and her son
> Blasphemed Semele's sacred child,
> When loaded with new speech and wine,
> He touched their mathematic land
> From Asia, bestial and divine.

Many of the poems, too, turn out to be variations on the same theme, which might be described, in the poet's words, as 'a vision born of nakedness'. What vision? The answer is perhaps found in 'The Unabiding', if you can keep sufficiently clear-headed to discover it.

What Sansom gives, by contrast, is water. His poetry does not disturb the brain-centres, which are not severely tested. You can see to the bottom of every poem, even those that tell, through its witnesses, the story of Jesus of Nazareth, who ceases to be the mysterious person who changes water into wine. Although this sequence of poems won an Arts Council prize, and has an appealing simplicity, it lacks depth. One recalls an early poem on Good

Friday by Thomas Blackburn . . . But to be fair, Sansom, unlike Blackburn, visits the country, takes an interest in all sorts of people and places, ranges widely in search of poetic material, and avoids every monotony except that of obviousness.

If you like Blackburn's sort of poetry you will probably despise Sansom's. Or are you capable of enjoying both water and wine?

STRICTLY CLASSICAL

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Greek Lyrics, translated by Richmond Lattimore (University of Chicago Press. London: Cambridge University Press, 17s.).

The Knights, by Aristophanes, translated by Gilbert Murray (Allen and Unwin, 8s. 6d.).

Classical Influences on English Prose by J. A. K. Thomson (Allen and Unwin, 16s.).

The Owl and The Nightingale, translated by Graydon Eggers (Duke University Press. London: Cambridge University Press, 22s. 6d.).

Greek drama in the golden age of the fifth century B.C. followed nearly two centuries of great lyrical poetry, including the poems of personal passion by Alcaeus and Sappho, the songs of pleasure by Anacreon and the stately magnificence of Pindar. These are well remembered; but there were many others, and Richmond Lattimore has rendered a service by translating, in verses that match the delicacy of earthiness of the originals, ninety-one poems or fragments covering sixteen selected or anonymous poets. In a work of fifty pages there are necessarily important gaps, such as those made by the absence of Arion and Ibycus, and there is only one short snatch from Pindar, but the book is a fine introduction to a period of great influence and delight.

Dr. Gilbert Murray's translation of *The Knights,* by Aristophanes, in rhymed couplets of suppleness and gaiety, exemplifies the vigour, imagination and satirical power of that great comic dramatist. The shining devotion of Dr. Murray to the Hellenic spirit is beyond words of mine to praise.

Two early books by J. A. K. Thomson dealt with the general classical background of English literature and with classical influences in English poetry. Now he traces with easy mastery the direct influence of Greek and Roman prose, and illustrates his theme with discernment, his selections ranging from the vivid Thucydides to the eloquent Cicero. Two thoughts are impelled in a poet: how classical writing was designed for reading aloud, the sound being abundantly important to the sense, and how, with an inner harmony and restraint, imagination and passion never run amok.

It is revealing to read the modern rendering of the early English poem *The Owl and The Nightingale* by Graydon Eggers. The work of Nicholas of Guildford, written in octosyllabic couplets at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when Latin and French models were first prompting and inspiring our fledgling poets, the two dramatized bird characters, troubadour and sage, indulge in accomplished badinage and repartee that is enchanting. The underlying human implications make it a splendid precursor to Langland and Chaucer.

SHAKESPEARE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

New Readings in Shakespeare, by C. J. Sisson (Cambridge University Press, 2 vols. 45s.).

Beaumont and Fletcher, a Critical Study, by William W. Appleton (Allen and Unwin, 12s. 6d.).

On the Poetry of Spenser and the Form of Romances, by John Arthos (Allen and Unwin, 21s.).

These three studies are addressed primarily to scholars. It is from the first of them that most pleasure and profit will be derived, and, to some extent, by the ordinary reader. Professor Sisson arranges the results of his researches clearly and compactly. The first volume deals with each textual crux in the Comedies and Poems; the second, with his proposed emendations of similarly obscure passages in the Histories and Tragedies. As a literary detective he is mainly concerned with the tracking down of errors arising in the transmission from Elizabethan MSS to print. A good example is his proposed restoration of 'Brutus, *bait* not me' for the long-accepted 'bay', first suggested by Theobald. The Professor's challenges to many of the explanations of Shakespeare's text we have so long taken for granted are most stimulating; he succeeds at least in making us think again, and he would be the last person to claim that his findings are final.

For a whole century audiences and readers ranked Beaumont and Fletcher with Shakespeare and Jonson. What is more, when the theatres reopened at the Restoration after the long Puritan suppression, it was Beaumont and Fletcher, especially with their comedies, and not Shakespeare, that the public wanted. It was not until after William's and Mary's accession that there began a complete reversal in their popularity. Even Lamb's and Coleridge's antiquarian and romantic enthusiasms failed to revive public interest in them, and in our own day T. S. Eliot has dismissed their dramatic artificiality as 'cut and slightly withered flowers stuck into the sand'. All this Mr. Appleton traces and discusses in detail in his critical study, and with it much more: their work as apprentice dramatists, their joint plays, their collaboration with Shakespeare and others, and the plays which are purely Fletcher's. He pleads gallantly for some restoration of their fame, but the chances that their theatrical baroque will ever recapture the popular fancy seem very slight.

The last of the three books is a carefully written and conscientiously documented thesis rather than a work that is original, even for criticism. But what that is new can possibly be said about Spenser at this long distance from his poem's appearance? Professor Arthos, however, does throw considerable light on why Spenser failed to achieve unity in his *Faerie Queene,* and why the fine Mutability Cantos differ so much from the main body of the poem. He is at his best when he shows by parallel passages from the *Faerie Queen* and from the Italian of Boiardo, Ariosto and Tasso, sensitively translated, the poet's indebtedness to these authors.

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

NOTES BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF

(The inclusion of a new work in these notes does not preclude a subsequent review.)

In these difficult times, made uncommonly hazardous by the defections of a naughty world, it is a relief to be able to announce the appearance of a new periodical. *Northern Broadsheet,* edited by Dorothy Una Ratcliffe, is a richly-produced collection of poems by North-country authors, and their names give ample assurance that this is a serious as well as an authentic venture (42 Ann Street, Edinburgh 4, 2s.). John Redwood-Anderson, Wilfrid Gibson, Phoebe Hesketh, James Kirkup, Norman Nicholson, Sir Herbert Read, and the Editor herself – these are admirably represented, and others have promised to contribute in future numbers. Dorothy Una Ratcliffe is a true-blue North Countrywoman, famed as 'Yorkshire's Sweetest Singer,' and several of the poems, very properly, are in dialect. 'Bairns,' by F. Austin Hyde, written in the East Riding vernacular 'on receiving an appeal for destitute children,' has, one suspects, given her as much pleasure as any:

> Just 'cos, thank God, it's niver come ti me
> Ti feel t'wet causey wi' caud frozzen feet,
> Nor knaw what 'wet-shod' ivery neet i'd week
> Can mean 'mid slush an' snaw an' sleet,
> Ah mun remember t'bairns.

GOOD PUBLISHING

From the publisher and poets whose book has already been dealt with we turn to the publisher of two other new collections – John Hoffman, who has transferred The Guild Press to York from Chesterfield, and has celebrated the change of address by publishing Lady Margaret Sackville's *Miniatures (Second Series)*, many of them already familiar to us – and glad indeed are we to have them 'on their own.' Mr. Hoffman's latest book, *The Search*, is another new work from the Press (Crayke, York, 3s. 6d. each). 'O-ho there! Sail on, O happy voyager!' Our wish for Mr. Hoffman is quoted from his own booklet, and it refers also to a still younger publishing house – Poetry Publications, one of their earliest books having a personal interest for us. *In Tranquil Mood,* by Marjorie Dyer (2s. 6d.), with a preface by Robert Armstrong of The Poetry Society General Council, includes a poem which first appeared in these pages – 'Softly Call.' The *Selected Poems* of Thomas Edwin Earth (5s.) come from the same publishers, and so does a rather topical one, *Majorca*, by P. J. Rawlings (2s.). Each of these booklets is charmingly produced, with an individual type that is very effective.

From Peter Russell, also a poet-publisher, we have received a bundle of books and booklets. Two of them are *Night Poem and Other Pieces* by Frederick Grice (3s. 6d.) and *The Future of the World* by Charles David Ley (8s. 6d.). The last-named is a three-act play, with scenes in Moscow, Alaska, Washington, and, truly sinister, 'A ruined hut somewhere in Europe' – 'The end of the World.' The Fortune Press has published *Farewell in Eden* by Mary Grew (6s.), and *The High and the Lowly*, by Lake Aske (6s.), whose work is known to our readers through his occasional contributions. A poem 'Corona' was awarded

by Cecil Day Lewis the first prize of £100 in a competition for Coronation Year:

> When, swung in the eliptic, the cinder moon
> Chokes momently the furnace of the sun,
> Dampering the heat and light and life
> Until it seems the world's end is begun –

– which is probably intended as the opening of a sonnet, although only lines 2 and 4, 10 and 12, 13 and 14, have rhyme-endings – unless we accept *fire* and *higher* (6 and 8) as legitimate in what is or should be the most exact technical form in poetry.

DEVOUTNESS THE KEYNOTE

Denys Blakelock, a young actor in the London theatre, has written his first book of verse, *The Waters* (Assisi Press, Dublin, 3s. 6d.). It is dedicated to Eleanor Farjeon, and includes a grateful acknowledgment to Ernest Milton 'for his beautiful and distinguished reading of a group of these poems.' Devoutness is the keynote – even in a lyric such as 'Winter Wings,' that belongs to the secular world:

> And let me never think
> Of loves that part
> In summer sweetness,
> Or with the falling leaf
> In autumn.

The same publishers have also issued *The Inn*, poems by Lucius McClean (5s.), a beautifully designed and produced little volume, well worthy to stand alongside Mr. Blakelock's. Devoutness is here too – and frank rebelliousness:

> Thousands of pounds to honour the dead –
> And the living are wasting, weary for bread.

A final grouping of books under one publisher's imprint brings us to Stockwell, who has six in his Spring list. At the head of them is *Ovid in Arcady* (5s.) – deceptive title, but delightfully deceptive (the author, F. B. Julian, is a well-known physician and a J.P. in Liverpool, so that 'Juliet and the Justice' does not surprise us). *The Harp of Love*, by Irma Herd and Emma M. Bourchier's *Bouquet of Poems* (1s. 6d. each), are brave little ventures: *The Dancer*, by P. J. Rawlings, is rather daring here and there, and *Poems for Easter, 1956*, is an anthology admirably epitomized in Gladys M. Adshead's concluding line ('To a Friend Abroad') – 'England's magic always brings you home.' These two last-named booklets are priced at 2s. apiece.

WHIMSICAL EDITING

The only other anthologies in recent months are the vastly different *Seven Centuries of Poetry* edited by A. N. Jeffares (Longmans Green, 21s.) and *A Book of Australian Verse*, selected by Judith Wright (Oxford University Press, 15s.). If the reader wishes to follow the fashion before it fades out the first of these collections will help him. Ten pages devoted to T. S. Eliot, five-and-a-half to Dylan Thomas, one to Hardy, one to Edmund Blunden, half of one (a sonnet) to John Masefield, less than four divided between W. H. Davies and Walter de la Mare, two and a third to Anne Ridler, and none at all to Kathleen Raine . . . The lay-out of the pages is just as whimsical.

South Africa, Canada, U.S.A. – new books are here from each of these distant lands. Cape Town has been the home of John Dronsfield since he

left Oldham, Lancashire, in 1939, and he died in the Cape five years ago. A Memorial Exhibition of his drawings, paintings, and designs for the theatre over there was held last year – we learn from the preface that 'he designed the *décor* and costumes for the Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies-Marda Vanne production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1945,' and he also composed the incidental music. Comparatively few people were aware that he wrote poetry as well. At its most attractive, indeed, we find it in 'Visitation,' inscribed to Miss Ffrangcon-Davies 'in memory of 16th March, 1951', a tribute to this gifted actress's power to transform a whole world into a kingdom ruled by one of 'a baker's dozen of Shakespeare's women.' Those of our readers who were fortunate enough to be present at 33 Portman Square on the occasion of her Shakespeare recital will wish to have this seven-page heroine-worshipping poem in permanent form, and it is included in *Satires and Verses* by John Dronsfield (Oxford University Press. London: Cumberlege, 15s.).

BOOKSELLERS ARE SHY!

Going back to Australia for a moment: we have received a bibliography and criticism by Hugh Anderson: *Frank Wilmot* (Furnley Maurice) from the Melbourne University Press, sponsored here by the Cambridge University Press (21s.). Frank Wilmot was a poet and playwright of much renown in his own country, and creative writers will be glad to know about him. Canada has two volumes to show us: *The Haloed Tree,* by Fred Cogswell (Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1 dollar), and *My Soul Sings,* by Lorene Frances Milliken (Carillon Chapbooks, Toronto, 1 dollar). Pleasantly representative, both of them, of much that is now being written across the Atlantic. The new number of *The Fiddlehead* (Fredericton, N.B., English address, Bank of Montreal, London, S.W.1, 12s. for four issues), is accompanied by a complaint that in the very city in which a certain poet lives not a single bookseller can be found who will handle the poet's publication. This state of things appears to be regrettably widespread in Canada. 'Since the publishing of The Fiddlehead Poetry Books Series was started, we have written more than forty booksellers, enclosing sample copies, offering to take back and pay for any unsold copies after a reasonable time has lapsed, and offering a liberal percentage of the price of the book as a commission for selling. Ninety-five per cent of the stores in question have not even replied to our letters. The same is also true of inquiries we have made with respect to selling *The Fiddlehead.*'

Space forbids more than a brief record of the new arrivals from American and English publishers. *Sonnets and Songs,* by Margaret Fuller and *Wombats and Moondust,* by Thomas Burnett Swann, are Wings Press Books, California (2.50 dollars each), and the Vantage Press, New York, have published *Snow-Crystal Universe,* by Alexander Clarke (also 2.50 dollars). *Demon in Love,* by Horatio Colony (Hampshire Press, Cambridge, Mass., unpriced): *Horn of the Unicorn,* by Lillian Parnell (Wagon and Star Publishers, Los Angeles, 2 dollars): *Sea Climate,* by J. Phoenice (Coffield, Oregon, 25 cents): *Calls,* by Frank Peto (Hajos, Houston, Texas, unpriced); and *Thoreau,* a biography in sonnets, by Langley Carleton Keyes (University of North Carolina. Geoffrey Cumberlege, London, 20s.), are sure to find favour somewhere or other. The last-cited work, for example, will appeal to readers who are attracted

by the mind and spirit of the author of the immortal *Walden, or Life in the Woods*.

Now for a final batch of home publications. First, *Heart to Heart*, by Philip T. Oyler (Aldington Hall, Macclesfield, 2s.): *Passed By*, by Elizabeth Pinney-Hunt (Eyre and Spottiswoode, no price) – the sixteenth book by an American lady who evidently prefers to be published here: *Dear Homo*, by Florence Mary Venables (Bognor Regis, 6s.) – 'How cold is the moon's kiss on the sleeping roses': *Life's Melodies*, by Lilla M. Willetts – 'Their music ringing to the end of time' (Mitre Press, 5s.): *Tally 300*, a poem in three parts by J. P. Fletcher (Hand and Flower Press, 10s. 6d.), a remarkable work about which we hope to say more in our next number: *The Anacreonta*, translated into English verse by P. M. Pope – the hope applies here also (Bowes and Bowes, 10s. 6d.): and *Pleiades*, by eight young writers at Marlborough College, hand printed there, and published at 8s. May we suggest that these schoolboys might profit by knowing that such a magazine as *The Poetry Review* exists?

ON BEING PRINTED

A poet may ask why it almost seems enough joy to be in print without being paid as well. What's the explanation, I wonder, for the urge to be published, to be hung, to be performed? The private contemplation of one's creation isn't enough. At any rate, it can be divinely justified by the fact that God didn't stop at night-skies and kingfishers and the smell of roses, but created *us* for want of a public. We're part of God (whatever that is) observing part of God endlessly. I'm sure every inspiration, art, skill, craft, ability right down to the faintest awareness lessens the difference between the two parts.

Reaction must be the most important and useful word of all in the relationship between man and God, man and man, man and matter. When there's reacting, there's *happening* – which is more being than just *being*; if only one knew how to say it. And I'm sure that what is 'just being' is more real when it is causing a reaction than when it isn't – Stonehenge is more real when a tourist looks at it (or a blind man bumps against it) than otherwise. Shakespeare is more real when the Old Vic rocks at one bawdy joke than when all his wisdom and imagery die on library shelves. I'm reacting – I'm happening. It's something between being created and creating that *makes* me write.

STEPHANIE BOYD

CAN WE HELP YOU?

The answer is Yes to any Member who is anxious for the best advice about his or her work. The Poetry Society established a CRITICAL SERVICE some years ago, and writers are invited to make use of it.

Two poems may be submitted for criticism and help, for a minimum fee of 5s. The charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

COMPETITIONS FOR EVERYBODY—
READERS AS WELL AS POETS

I – *Final Instalment . . .*

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT COMPETITION
ONE HUNDRED POUNDS IN PRIZES

The Poetry Society has pleasure in presenting the third instalment of a fascinating new *Competition for Poets, Non-Poets, and Readers of Poetry.*

We offer – our record figure so far –

£100 IN PRIZES

No prize will exceed FIFTY POUNDS, and none will be less than TEN POUNDS. The qualities required to win are simple: a love of Poetry, a little Imagination, and a Good Memory. Competitors need never have written a line of verse in their lives!

This is the final instalment of a unique Competition: a long 'poem', not original but invented, built by 'Palgrave Q. Dobree' entirely of LAST LINES FROM KNOWN POEMS. Each line is an authentic quotation, and for the guidance of entrants we have previously given an example. Readers everywhere must trace the source of as many lines as possible. The winners will be those who give the largest correct number of sources. Each tenth line is numbered alongside, and the number of the line must be stated with the source, as for instance:

1. 'Auguries of Innocence', William Blake.

The serialization now being ended, each competitor must submit his or her three lists of sources accompanied by a Coupon, clipped from the advertisement section of this issue, and securely fastened to the entry. *No entry without a coupon will be considered.* As the Competition is world-wide, ample time is allowed for the mailing of entries, and the closing date is 1st September, 1956, the envelope to be addressed 'Last Lines', Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

LAST LINES: PART THREE

PALGRAVE Q. DOBREE

Since Nature's pride is now a withered daffodil
You'd almost think it was despair
(But the toil of a fruitless pilgrimage)
God put me here to find,
Though I sang in my chains like the sea
Of the heart and its ache
And all we need of hell
But pity for the grief they cannot feel –
The legions who have suffered and are dust
Mixed with the swish of many falling flowers.

We shall go mad, no doubt, and die that way –
The grave gives time for rest when we are in it.

But I am not content
(Nor wonder overmuch)
And that has made all the difference
And that which never is to die for ever must be young
And day and night yield me delight once more
Golden with melting mist,
With dews of immortality,
The frolic architecture of the snow
Mid the waves of the wind on the glittering water
Closed against gnats, the moth, and the mouse
That is the world's bane.

When God has made the pile complete
May I be there to see
Yonder, yes yonder, yonder, yonder,
What man has made of man
With lions, tigers, leopards and their kind
Watched by every human love.
A king's son ahead of them showing them the way
Will lead my steps aright
Gently, dreamily, quietly over desolate sands.
Are the things so strange and marvellous *you* see or have seen?

* * *

By the vibrations of my heart
We feel that we are greater than we know –
Will know 'the reason why' –
And O, 'tis true, 'tis true
I hear it in the deep heart's core!
So Man that dies shall live again
Triumphing over Death and Chance and thee, O Time,
And he won't be coming here any more;
And music shall untune the sky –
Love itself shall slumber on
Unless to waken so –
And what thou art may never be destroyed,
Might live, invisible and dim,
To live with *Him* and sing in endless morn of light,
Bright-harnessed angels in order serviceable,
Till we shall meet and never part,
Till I reach heav'n, and (much more) thee,
And then meet *here* –

Round the world and home again,
Round by the lilac bushes back to you.

I stared into the sky –
Cold Death had taken his first citadel.
What have *we* done to Death that we must die
Lightly as drifted leaves on an endless plain?
What's *death*? You'll love me yet
Remembered on waking,
Find me and turn thy back on heaven
So that I come again at last to thee,
And I with thee shall choose to live
(And ah! shall we be young together?)
When I have crost the bar
That stand upon the threshold of 'the new'.
We'll dance again the saraband
And then this day my life shall date
And in your fragrant bosom dies
These momentary pleasures, fugitive delights –
The *world's* but their's; but my Belovèd's mine
And, having nothing, yet hath all.
To the end, to the end they remain
And Death shall have no dominion,
Let who will think us dead or wish our death.

(*The End*)

II – *More Time for This . . .*

THE ALBERT RALPH KORN QUATRAIN CONTEST

The time allowed for submitting entries in this competition is now extended to 31st August, for the convenience of overseas readers. Will our older Centres note that *Membership Numbers are not required?*

This competition has been arranged through the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn of New York, and

A PRIZE OF FIFTEEN POUNDS

is the Award. It is offered for the best Quatrain, a stanza of four rhyming lines, and we do not require that they shall be strictly arranged.

The judges will be appointed by The Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*. The MS must be neatly typewritten and sent anonymously, with the Author's name and address to accompany it in a sealed envelope. No manuscript can be returned. The outer envelope must be addressed: 'Albert Ralph Korn Quatrain Contest,' The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, England.

POEMS ABOUT MUSIC

Readers who are acquainted as Poets with Music will welcome another of our fascinating Competitions, to be announced in the next issue of *The Poetry Review*. The Prize is again a generous one.

Members are urged to take this opportunity of making known The Poetry Society to their friends who are primarily Musicians.

III – *A Famous Annual*

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITION FOR 1955–56

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of

TWENTY POUNDS

as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed 'The Greenwood Prize', 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date is 31st August, 1956.

IV – *Members and Subscribers only*

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION 28

The above competition continues as before with the total entrance fees as prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed 'Premium Competition', *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize money will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st Sept., 1956.

V – *An Old Favourite*

ORIOLE PRIZE, 1956

ORIOLE (a Poets' Group of The Poetry Society) offers an award of

FIVE POUNDS

for the best poem on *The Spirit of Place*. The Competition is open to all; entrance fee 2s. 6d. per entry. Competitors must adopt a pseudonym which should appear in block capitals on the manuscript, and in a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address.

Poems will not be returned. The winning poem may be published in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date, 31st July, 1956. Address: Oriole Prize, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

The result of the 'Which and Why' Competition will be announced in our next issue.

LATEST PRIZE REPORTS AND AWARDS

ADAM MICKIEWICZ CENTENARY COMPETITION

PAUL SELVER

This competition produced forty-eight entries from various parts of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as from Ceylon, Israel, the United States of America, South Africa, Egypt and Sweden.

In the Polish original the sonnets of Mickiewicz are Petrarchan in form, with six main stresses to the line. As competitors could not be expected to know this, and as in any case, the alexandrine has never really established itself in English poetry, the entries were judged, as far as technique was concerned, by any generally accepted standards.

The main problem was to do justice to the highly decorative original so as not to omit any of its essential features, and this called for considerable verbal skill. In many cases the imagery of the original was followed too closely, and this resulted in an overloaded effect.

A few of the entries were of exceptional quality, and the adjudicators did not find it easy to reach a final assessment, but after several scrutinies the prizes of fifteen, ten, and five guineas were awarded as follows: First prize: W. R. Latham, 13 Eliot Park, Lewisham Hill, London, S.E.13. Second prize: Mrs. Rachel Burrows, The Grammar School, Cork, Eire. Third prize: Miriam S. Foote, 1020 Hulton Road, Oakmont, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

AYUDAH

W. R. LATHAM

Leaning against the rock, I watch the tide,
Now in dark ranks, now white with crested snow,
Foam to the shore; I see the spindrift throw
A thousand shattered rainbows far and wide.
The waves crash on the sand, then scattering, glide
Like slithering ocean monsters as they go
To spoil the land, and in their backward flow
Drag coral, pearls and shells, the victor's pride.

So, too, come storms of passion surging over
The poet's heart, but when he sweeps the strings
His music calms the turmoil of his spirit,
And with the receding storm he will recover
Treasures of beauty, imperishable things,
Songs that the unborn centuries will inherit.

ALUSHTA BY DAY

RACHEL BURROWS

Now from the mountain in the morning air
The grey cloak slips, prayer stirs the gold-eared field;
The forest tresses shed their May-time yield
Of rare gems, like the Caliph's beads of prayer.
O'er flower-starred meadows gay as rainbow's hair,
Fair butterflies like flying blossoms wield
Bright darts of colour, and far off concealed
The shard-winged locust finds his grassy lair.

There where the seething waters boil and roar
On mirrored ocean stares the naked rock;
Advancing waves a tiger's light display
Threatening with tempest fierce the cowering shore;
And in calm depths beyond the white swans flock
And on the rocking swell serenely play.

ALUSHTA BY DAY

MIRIAM S. FOOTE

The mountain shakes away its cloak of mist,
The golden corn-field breathes its morning prayer,
The forest tree bows low – a ritualist,
Scattering gems like prayer-beads from its hair.
The meadow is in bloom, and flying flowers
Are fluttering overhead – a rainbow cloud
Of butterflies, born of the fleeting hours;
And here a locust drags its wingèd shroud.

Down by the sea where boiling tides baptize
The hard, bare rock, attack, and ebb once more,
The foam glows with the light of tigers' eyes,
Heralding storms for those who dwell on shore;
And where the waves so lightly dance and leap
Pale swans are calmly bathing in the deep.

PREMIUM COMPETITION REPORT No. 27

MARY GILES

The standard of the entries for this competition was very good on the whole, and it has not been easy to eliminate any of the poems. Consequently, I hope that those people who are not mentioned will take heart. They can at least have the satisfaction of knowing that they gave the adjudicator a somewhat testing although a very agreeable time.

I enjoyed reading all the manuscripts but there is one point which struck

me in connection with several of them. It was that the flow and thought had been temporarily lost by too much striving for effectively sounding words. This was particularly true in the lyric poems.

After several readings of each poem, four drew my attention back to them yet again. The first of these was Elizabeth Drury's 'Night and Day'. I thought the stanza on Day very expressive. The philosophy in the first half of 'To an Unknown Reader' by Ilse Zuidema was impressive. Finally the sheer simplicity of two others delighted me. They were 'You Shall Know' by Muriel Woodward and 'Life' by Ronald Mann. I found Dr. Mann's poem especially charming, and to him goes the Premium Award.

The following are also highly commended: W. R. Latham for 'What Is a Poem', Margaret Sheppard Fidler for 'Sailor's Daughter', Patricia Martland for 'Itteringham Mill', Veronica Ross for 'France Was Blue', Dorothy Howard for 'Eurydice', and M. Rhodes for 'The Alhambra, Granada'. Commended are 'Earth's Song' by G. Michael, 'Silver Birch – March' by Winifred Kingdon-Ward, and 'The Spirit Lives' by W. W. Baker.

LIFE

RONALD D. MANN

Life goes,
Like the whispering rain
As the listening breeze
Comes again.

Life, like a rose,
In the time of a day
Folds its petals and drifts
Softly away.

Life, like the water in clouds,
Falls again, like the rain,
And dries from the rose:
As the sun knows.

PORTMAN SQUARE—LIONS AND LAMBS

They roared us gently as any sucking dove – but that was at the Annual Luncheon, about which you may read elsewhere; March was a lion with icicles still in his mouth. Notwithstanding his unkind breath, a good audience gathered for Patric Dickinson's play *Stone in the Midst*. Many of the original cast took part in a memorable reading of this poignant work, written for broadcasting. With no action or scenery, it was reconstructed entirely by voice, further proving its worth and the high gifts of the readers and producer, Kelty MacLeod.

A very much liked lecturer, J. M. Purser, talking about Stephen Spender, followed in mid-March. Apart from his always potent subject matter, what an example we had of how to talk to an audience; in the readers, Natalie Moya and Gerek Schelderup, no less enviable ease.

For a paschal offering, Beryl Cooke and Reginald Mathews selected an Easter

Collected Letters of
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Edited by E. L. GRIGGS

'Mr. Griggs's haul of new letters is rich in quality as well as quantity. . . . When we have Mr. Griggs's remaining three volumes we shall have the best portrait of the man yet painted.' *The Times*
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'Mr. L. C. Martin's edition . . . provides us with a definitive text, a few additional poems culled from contemporary miscellanies and valuable notes on chronology, sources, variants and associations. . . . . We can now profit by this lovely and comprehensive edition to judge the merits of a copiously talented poet.' Sir Harold Nicolson in *The Observer* 63*s. net*

The Poetical Works of
John Milton

Volume II. *Paradise Regain'd, Samson Agonistes, Poems Upon Several Occasions, both English and Latin*

Edited by HELEN DARBISHIRE

'For the first time, indeed, for nearly three hundred years, Milton's poems have appeared in an edition, whose text and printing would have satisfied even its exacting author.' *Oxford Magazine* 35*s. net*

Volume I. *Paradise Lost* 35*s. net*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

New Lines

Edited by

ROBERT
CONQUEST

An anthology of recent poetry compiled and with an introduction by Robert Conquest. The contributors to this volume are: Kingsley Amis, Robert Conquest, Donald Davie, D. J. Enright, Thom Gunn, John Holloway, Elizabeth Jennings, Philip Larkin and John Wain. **12s. 6d.**

☆

Some Phases of Love

P. D.
CUMMINS

A new book of verse by the author of ***The Defeated*** and ***One is One.*** 'Here is a modern poet who can accept time-honoured forms of English poetry and dexterously employ them to express her purpose and the contemporary mood'. *Poetry Review* **8s. 6d.**

MACMILLAN

anthology grouped round the Stations of the Cross. In early April the young Australian radio actor, Kim Corcoran, brought a team of national representatives living in London to open the book of Commonwealth poetry for us, and Friday, 13th April, was Audience Night under Stephen Graham. Mr. Graham's wise remarks about lifting up the voice should be noted by all prospective readers – not only on Audience Nights.

Thomas Moult took the Chair for R. N. Currey, already familiar to many from his broadcast talks, who clarified some knotty misconceptions regarding Modern Poetry. The following week brought the wonderful Beringer sisters in an illustrated talk on Hamlet's character. And who more fitted for it than Miss Vera, who played the rôle at the Arts Theatre! Our enchanter friend, A. E. Coppard, returned with poems and stories on 4th May of happy memory. He was assisted in these delights by June Franklin and the President took the Chair.

Ladies' Night gave us Joyce Sagar, Odette Tchernine, Jane Campbell and Mary Giles in a well-chosen programme and on the next Friday T. L. Adamson explored the Arthurian Legend with a wealth of examples. Maurice Lush introduced and rounded off an interesting lecture. K.V.R.

OUR THIRD REUNION – AT LUNCHEON IN MAY

ODETTE TCHERNINE

Poetry was in the air from the very first moment of our third Annual Luncheon on 12th May at the English-Speaking Union. The charmingly-arranged room was filled to the last table with members and their guests as the Rev. J. H. Ward, a life-long friend of the President, spoke a simple grace which he had composed in verse for the occasion:

'Now God be thanked for all – our daily food,
The tender ties of love and brotherhood,
Things beautiful and strong and true and good.
Remembering Our Father's loving care,
May we, His children, always try to share
His gracious gifts with all men everywhere.'

The customary greetings came from oversea-countries, including Tripoli, where Sir Eugen Millington-Drake now spends part of each year. He expressed 'real regret' for his absence, and congratulated the Society on its 'astonishing come-back of the last few years . . . achieved largely by laborious team-work and organization on poetically democratic lines'. Among the other well-wishers were Dame Sybil Thorndike, Sir Lewis Casson, Sir William Haley, and novelist Louis Golding.

Wine and wit flowed, and so did the sunshine through the tall windows of Dartmouth House. Before the Toasts were proposed a pleasant little ceremony was introduced by Margaret Rawlings. On behalf of her colleagues of the General Council she made a presentation to John Graddon, who was about to begin his tenth year as our Hon. Treasurer. This was our opportunity to express to him our great gratitude, appreciation, and affection, for what has been truly a labour of love, 'wise, courageous and selfless'. The tribute which fittingly took the form of a handsome brief-case, was made with Miss Rawlings's usual charm and sincerity. Another of the little ceremonies which have now become a feature of these Luncheons was a presentation by Thomas Moult to the Rev. Mr. Ward, without whose generosity and practical encouragement at the outset of his writing career – a gift of money covered the

FIRE IN HEAVEN

DANNIE ABSE

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cost of the first number of his magazine *Voices* and helped to launch him as an editor (and also Louis Golding as a writer) – Mr. Moult might not have become our President, a possibility the audience were quick to appreciate.

A warm welcome greeted Ruth Pitter, winner of the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, who read her exquisite poem, 'Swan Bathing'. It was a privilege to listen to her all too-rare speaking voice. Then came the first Toast, 'The Poetry Society', given with distinction by the Polish Ambassador, who took the opportunity to make the award to W. R. Latham of the Mickiewicz Prize in a competition that commemorated the birth of Poland's great poet a century ago. The adjudicator, Paul Selver, was present, but Stephen Graham, who collaborated, could not be with us.

Responding to the Toast on behalf of The Poetry Society, Joyce Grenfell gave a delicious illustration, rich in humour and superb in mimicry, of how poetry is often recited. How admirably Kennedy Williamson said *Thank you* to Miss Grenfell during his rhymed speech may be appreciated if we turn back to page 134 . . . Sir Alfred Munnings, who replied on behalf of 'Our Guests', declared roundly and in characteristic manner that he could not believe it. The brilliance of the wit, the aptness and precision of the various portraits, seemed to leave the P.P.R.A. breathless, gaping and gasping as he rose to his feet time after time to applaud some genial rapier-stroke of a masterly rhymer.

Sir Alfred Munnings' reply was exactly what we anticipated. He sent everybody away smiling, as Robert Morley and C. B. Fry had done at earlier Luncheons. Uproarious humour as well as the Maytime sun illuminated the afternoon's beauty, and as for Poetry, everywhere – along the top table especially – there were Poems in Person.

TEAM-WORK AT THE CENTRES

BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF

A correspondent in Scotland deplores 'the world-wide inertia these days that affects everybody, especially in the arts.' Without agreeing generally with him, it is necessary that we should admit the condition in particular instances. From a Centre overseas has come a report in which the pessimistic note may reflect the feeling elsewhere, so let us be helpful by quoting it. 'The failure of the Centre to attract the younger generation,' the report begins, 'is regarded here as serious. Perhaps we, who are concerned with poetry, do not show as much enthusiasm for their verse as they wish us to do. But we must be honest: they have a verbal dexterity – as in music so many pianists exhibit a digital dexterity. It is all, to us, second-hand.'

Let it be stated frankly in reply to this that in every Centre, judging by the attendance at open meetings, the scarcity of young people is palpable. But all serious movements, religious, political, and artistic appear to be suffering in the same way. Therefore the fault does not lie in our stars, but in the prevailing spirit. You cannot have two world-wide wars followed by escapism from the inevitable discords that are their sequel – and sometimes even the chaos, or the all too frequent 'what do I get out of it?' attitude, without the penalty being exacted in those quarters that are least able to pay it.

Some of our Centres are dependent on the work of one or two enthusiasts. It is these Centres that feel soonest the untruth of Ibsen's declaration that the strongest is he – or she – who stands alone. *Team-work* is vitally important in all movements that exist for the purpose of spreading the good news about Poetry, and when the

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team have been set to work the rest is patience, perseverance, and so much persistence in all the expressions of the endeavour that a turning-point is virtually sure to come.

At any rate, that is the experience at those Centres which were faced with a slump and have survived.

SUFFOLK

Sometimes the threat of a slump is without real substance. It was not very cheering to read in *The Times* that while eighty-eight competitors entered for the first annual poetry prize in honour of George Crabbe, 'that resolute debunker of the rural scene,' as the writer described him, 'this year there are only five.' Promptly and happily Mr. Francis Engleheart, the Chairman, made a correction: the entrants, he announced, were not five but thirty-three. 'Even this may seem poverty as compared with last year's plethora of eighty-eight, but that may be just as well since this time narrative poems are called for.'

At the Suffolk Centre the February meeting, like each during the winter, was held in Ipswich. A programme of 'Poetry, Prose, Music' was given by Miss C. Watson, a member, and Mr. Curtis, of Belstead House, with Miss Shannons playing the gramophone. In the following month James Turner, one of the judges for this year's Crabbe Competition, spoke on John Clare. The Centre assembles at some country place for the summer meetings, so the members have gone 'out to grass' for the season. Two of the bright particular stars since then have been Mr. Jack Lindsay and Mr. Kennedy Williamson of the Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review*. Miss Kay Turner, 1 Willoughby Road, Ipswich, is the greatly admired Hon. Secretary.

BURGESS HILL

At the Aspendell Private Hotel, where this Centre meets every month on the second Saturday, recent talks have been about 'Byron' and 'Modern Poetry.' A Poetry Competition for members has just closed. New session begins 8th September. Enquire from Miss K. G. Boycott, 'Twemlow,' Jane Lane, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

'Until I came to the Poetry Centre here,' said a member at a recent meeting of this group, 'I didn't know anyone in Weybridge who spoke my language.' That the Centre organizer, Mrs. Elsie Gittens, should value this testimony is natural – and, let us add, it is well-deserved. The monthly gatherings, which take place on the third Thursday of the month, usually at Mrs. Gittens's address, 28 Oatlands Drive, have been full of interest this season. (The February meeting, however, was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Best, this occasion being the first in six years away from the Secretary's.)

In March, Mrs. Jean Palmer gave a talk on Edith Sitwell's poetry. Mrs. Palmer, who lives at Oxshott, and who is a life-long student of Dr. Sitwell, emphasized the break between her earlier and later work. The imaginative range and capacity of her poems during and after the war-years has been impressive, said the speaker, 'and she can well be accepted as a great figure of this age.' In Mrs. Palmer's beautiful voice the Sitwell poems were read at their best. Mrs. Britton (a cousin of Christopher Fry), the Hon. Mrs. Sylvia George, and Mr. John Gittens, read Shakespeare's sonnets in April, and Mr. L. Best contributed something about the current controversy over the authenticity of Shakespeare's authorship. At the following month's meeting Mr. Kenneth Lillington discussed the poetry of the 'nineties and read from it. Oscar Wilde, Ernest Dowson, and Aubrey Beardsley in particular were recalled. These talks are splendidly attended, and helpful suggestions are often made by members.

NATAL AND DURBAN (S.A.)

The chairman of this quickly-developing Centre overseas, Mr. Thomas H. Lawrence, has broadcast very attractively, we hear, about the work in South Africa. His confident tone has shown how much new hope and courage there is among his

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little band of workers in spite of the despondency and indifference that are all too often a sequel after hearing voices 'destructive and discordant.'

The Committee's report on the Afrikaans Poetry entries in the junior Poet-Laureate competition held by the Centre reads as follows: 'We consider the Afrikaans all made good efforts. One by Catherine Lubbe on 'The Butterfly' is a charming child's poem expressing the hope-sincerely expressed – that the beautiful little creature should not be harmed by the world or feel desolate as the writer herself often does. Catherine Lubbe has not yet developed (because of her age, probably), any real sense of rhythm or the use of words.

'The poems by Kruger van Niekerk, especially 'Reen in die Stad,' were intensely-felt vignettes written in a very mature style. In this instance, a sense of rhythm has been developed apart from metre, and the choice of words is excellent. Very interesting and promising work.'

NOVA SCOTIA (CANADA)

Mrs. A. G. Baird, the Recording Secretary of this famous Canadian Centre, visited England and Germany in the Spring, her first trans-Atlantic visit since 1950. Mrs. Baird has supplied us with a list of the officers elected at January's annual meeting. An impressive list: it is headed by the name of the Hon. Chief Justice Ilsley as 'patron,' and the president is Mr. Gilbert S. Hart. Included on the panel are fourteen others, including a librarian (Miss Archibald), two 'programme co-convenors' (Mrs. Beckford and Mrs. Webber), and a hostess convenor (Mrs. A. G. Tyler). The anniversary dinner was held in March.

PITTSBURG (U.S.A.)

Our congratulations go to Mrs. Grace Porterfield Polk, who is a vice-president of The Poetry Society. Mrs. Marie Tello Phillips reports that Mrs. Polk has, at her request, 'established numerous branches and solicited many new members, a remarkable piece of work which will continue.' Tampa, Florida, and The Maples, Indiana, are named as examples in this tribute, and already the fruits of her practicable, selfless enthusiasm are being shown in an access of new subscribers. Grace Porterfield Polk is a poet herself: see 'White Heron' in the April number. Mrs. Phillips welcomes enquiries between May and November at 6427 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh, and from November to May at 5109 North Bay Road, Miami Beach 40, Florida.

CHICAGO

It has been the sad duty of Mrs. Ruth Crary Clough, who presides over this American Centre, to report to us a great loss in the death of Mrs. Grace Lopez-Diaz, Founder, Hon. Treasurer and a Vice-President of the parent Society since 1935, and also the death of Mrs. Cora E. Moran, a long-time member. We are always anxious that the relatives and friends of our members who pass away should know how deeply we feel that they are no longer with us in our work.

Mrs. Anna T. Mulligan is now the Hon. Treasurer. At the same time as we offer her our wishes for much happy endeavour, we congratulate Mrs. Clough on continuing as President of the Centre (St. Clair Hotel, Chicago 11). Incidentally Ruth Crary Clough gained an honourable mention in the Ralph Korn New York State Poetry Day Contest which was won last year by Edsel Ford of New Mexico. Her new book *Poetry is Fun* was reviewed in our January-March number. We hear that many of the members of this wonderfully active Centre are eagerly competing in our Quatrain Contest.

Finally, here is a list of Centres in addition to those already mentioned:

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